

1882

LA IN SENNE.



A NOVEL.



IN THREE VOLUMES.



“Reason still use, to reason still attend.”

POPE.



VOL. III.

Third Edition.

LONDON:

PRINTED AT THE

Minerva-Press,

FOR WILLIAM LANE, LEADENHALL-STREET.

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PLAIN SENSE.

CHAP. I.

“ Not with the purple colouring of success,
“ Is virtue best adorned.”

BARBAULD.

THE road from the village where Sir William and Ellen then were, to the great road which leads from Dresden to Prague, was intricate, and in some degree difficult, but Sir William relied upon his knowledge of the country, and undertook to instruct the drivers of the carriage the best and safest way.

VOL. III.

B

They

They left the village early in the morning, and hoped to be able to reach a tolerably good inn on the direct road from Dresden to Prague before a late hour at night ; but either Sir William deceived himself in the degree of information he possessed, or he never seriously intended to arrive at the spot marked out.

The day's journey was fatiguing, the roads rugged, often alarming, and they found themselves at the close of night entering into a thick forest, which by no means answered the description that had been given of any of the environs of the place that they had been directed to.

Ellen, who seldom felt vain or unfounded fear, was more fatigued than alarmed ; she did not think any danger threatened her, but she felt her strength so much exhausted that she apprehended she should not be able to support herself much longer.

Sir William expressed a very lively compassion for her situation, and endeavoured by every means in his power to raise her drooping

drooping strength and spirits. The gloom of the forest and the darkness of the night made it hazardous to attempt finding a road through the wood, yet there seemed to be no alternative, except the remaining where they were in the carriage all night. Ellen proposed this, but Sir William encouraging her with the hopes that this was really a forest with which he was well acquainted, and in the midst of which was situated a hunting box, where, if he were not mistaken in the place, he was assured they would be able to meet with some accommodation. It was at length determined to endeavour to find their way through the wood.

They proceeded very prosperously for some time, and had begun to hope, that even should they not find any house, they might at least be able, without accident, to penetrate the forest; but at the moment they indulged these hopes, the postillion, not able to see the track, drove over a fallen

tree that lay on one side of it, and overturned the carriage.

Sir William was supporting Ellen in his arms at the instant the accident happened, and happily contrived so to break the shock of the fall to her, that she received no material injury. It was, however, from the darkness of the night, and the position of the carriage, with difficulty that they were able to disengage themselves from it, and even when they were all safely placed on the ground, they knew not what next to do.

The carriage was broken, and to have attempted to mend it in the present darkness would have been a fruitless labour. It rained heavily, and Ellen was wholly unable to prosecute her journey on foot, when every step she took might lead her still farther from her way, and from every necessary assistance ; to stay where they were without shelter, chilled with cold, and drenched in rain, with no resting place but the wet ground, seemed to threaten the most fatal consequences to Ellen.

Sir

Sir William appeared half distracted, repeating every moment, "Good God! what have I done?" The servants exclaimed, "What shall we do?" The poor Saxon girl wept bitterly, and Ellen, when a little recovered from the first shock, seemed the only person capable of a rational thought.

"I cannot stand," said she, almost sinking from Sir William's arms as she spoke, "but if you can contrive to get at the little seat on which I rested my feet in the carriage, I can sit here 'till the postillions have a little ascertained where we are; if this is really the forest you take it for, we cannot be far from the hunting box you have described; from thence we may possibly procure light, and such assistance as will enable us either to remove thither, or so to raise the carriage that we may remain safe, and sheltered from the weather the remainder of the night."

Sir William pressed her tenderly to his heart, as if at once to thank her for her calmness and resolution, and to re-animate his own.

Thefeat was soon found, and Sir William placing Ellen in it, knelt behind her, and supported her in his arms. He then gave orders for one of the postillions and his own servants to pursue the track they were in, which he said, if he were right in his conjectures concerning the place, must bring them, in less than a mile, to the spot he had mentioned, there they had only to name his name, and tell his distress, and he was assured of every assistance that could be given.

The servants were absent nearly an hour, and Ellen was so much overcome by fatigue, the beating of the rain, and above all by the uncommon kind of distress that seemed to have seized Sir William, for as he joined his face to hers she felt his tears trickle down her cheeks, that when they returned she had scarcely power to benefit by the assistance they brought.

The most cheering part of this assistance was light, but that which afforded the most essential service was a small tilted cart, the bottom of which was well covered with straw.

Upon

Upon this, Sir William contrived to place the cushions of the carriage, so as to form a tolerable bed ; and having, by the help of the light, been enabled to get at a box of cordials, he made Ellen take some of them, and then, with the assistance of the servants, easily lifted her into the cart ; here he also placed the maid servant, who shivering, wet, and crying, made a most deplorable figure. The trunk that contained the night clothes furnished her with a seat, and Sir William making one of the men who had come from the house lead the way with a lantern, he himself mounting one of the chaise horses, accompanied the cavalcade by the side of the cart.

In this manner they proceeded rather more than a mile, and reached the house without any new accident, and with little farther inconvenience.

The first object was to change Ellen's clothes, and put her to bed, and when this was accomplished Sir William made her take such refreshments as could be procured, and

then left her in the hope that she would repose.

Nor was his hope vain. Worn out with fatigue, she soon dropped asleep, and after some hours of rest awoke much recruited.

Sir William appeared extremely pleased when he was assured that the adventures of the preceding night had been attended with no essential ill consequences. He proposed to continue where they were through the day, both because it was necessary the carriage should be repaired, and as a farther refreshment to Ellen.

Towards the evening of the day, Sir William told her that he had indeed widely mistaken the way he meant to have taken, and that he found he had wandered very distant from that which led into the public road to Prague, but that the mistake had brought him so near the mansion of an old friend, that except for the inconvenience that had occurred to her, he could not lament it.

He then mentioned the name of a lady, with whose son Ellen knew he had formerly been

been extremely connected, and he spoke in the highest terms of the hospitality and kindness which she had always shewn him.

“ We are not more than six miles from her house,” said he, “ and I should never forgive myself if I were to be so near without paying my respects to her; the carriage is now mended, we will go together, she will be delighted to see you, and I shall be surprised, from what I know of her character, if she does not offer you an asylum with her till you are in a fitter state to undertake a long journey. The misfortunes of yesterday have made me a coward, when I think of the length of the travel that is before you, I tremble for the consequences.”

Ellen declared herself very able to prosecute her journey to Vienna, and avowed the preference she should give to being in a house of her own, during her confinement, to any accommodations, however comfortable, that might be afforded her in another.

“ Well, we need not settle this now,” said Sir William, “ we will act as we see occasion.

This night at least we will pass with my old friend. But can you dispense with the attendance of your maid? I never saw such a fool, she blubbers and shivers yet; I should be very glad to exclude her from the party, and for one night—”

“ Oh! I can do very well without her,” interrupted Ellen, “ and indeed I shall be glad to save her any farther fatigue for a few hours, she has reason for her tears, she is extremely bruised and hurt, and is so stiff with the cold she caught last night, that she can hardly move; I shall desire that she will go to bed, and continue there till we rejoin her at this place to-morrow.”

All this being arranged, Sir William and Ellen began their little journey, but it seemed as if Sir William was doomed to be convicted of ignorance whenever he boasted of his knowledge of the country. The six miles seemed to be lengthened into twice that number, and it was already nearly dark, and yet there was no appearance of the habitation to which they were going.

“ Surely

“ Surely you cannot be again mistaken,” said Ellen, “ I should be sorry to pass such another night as the last.”

“ There is no mistake this time,” returned Sir William, rather peevishly, “ nor no danger.”

“ But surely we must have come much more than six miles ?”

“ Don’t you see the roads are bad and tedious ?”

“ I fear arriving at an unseasonable hour, and that your old friend, though glad to see us, may be put to some inconvenience.”

“ I never knew women direct their fears aright—I entreat you not to perplex yourself with what does not concern you.”

Ellen remained silent and sad ; the deepening shades of night added to the uneasiness of her sensations, and a confused apprehension of she hardly knew what stole over her mind. At length they arrived at the top of a long avenue, and Sir William calling hastily to the man to stop, “ This,” said he to Ellen, “ is the place, I will get out and

announce our arrival before the carriage can be heard at the house, lest our appearance at so late an hour may alarm the old lady; stay where you are about ten minutes, and then follow me slowly down the avenue."

So saying Sir William jumped out of the carriage, and left Ellen wondering, disturbed, and unhappy. The servants obeyed the directions given, and in about the time prescribed followed Sir William.

CHAP II.

“ All gracious heaven,
“ Just are thy ways, and righteous thy decrees;
“ But dark and intricate; else why this meed,
— “ This sad return,
“ For innocence and truth.”

ANSTY.

THE avenue was closed at the other end by a large pair of gates, which opened into a court, surrounded by buildings; the gates they found open, and were directed by a light immediately opposite, to drive up to the door of the house. Here they found Sir William.

“ We

“ We are extremely unlucky,” said he, as he opened the chaise door, and assisted Ellen to get out, “ my old friend has spent the winter at Prague, a thing she never did when I knew her, and she is not yet returned.”

“ Then,” said Ellen, shrinking back, “ let us return, the night is fine, and now we know the road, it will not appear half so tedious as it did in coming.”

“ No, no, I will not suffer that: I have still a friend in the garrison. We shall be well accommodated to-night, and I will not again expose myself to your unreasonable fears of darkness, and rugged roads.”

“ That’s a reproach I hardly deserve,” said Ellen, smiling, “ but be it as you will.”

She then entered the door, which opened into a long and narrow passage, and in which there was no other light than that which Sir William held in his hand. He led the way, and they soon found themselves in a hall, not very spacious, but very gloomy. Here they were met by a respectable looking person, who had also a light in her hand; she was a

woman

woman of about fifty, and seemed to regard Ellen with looks of the most scrutinizing curiosity.

“ That’s my old friend, the housekeeper,” said Sir William, “ and she assures me her lady would never forgive her if she were to turn us from her doors at this time of night.”

Ellen was going to make her acknowledgments, in French, but Sir William said, “ You may spare your civilities, for the old dame understands not a word of any language, but her native German.”

“ Upon how many occasions lately,” exclaimed Ellen, “ have I had reason to regret my ignorance of that language!” Then from a sudden feeling, that this might sound as a taunt to Sir William, who had refused her permission to learn it, she added, “ but all cause for regret will soon be over; once returned to dear England, and I hope we shall speak only English for the rest of our lives.”

As she said this the light that the woman held fell full on the face of Sir William, and Ellen saw with surprise the sudden alteration

of his countenance. He cast up his eyes, with a look almost of horror, and repeated, “Once returned to England.”

Ellen took hold of his arm, and perceived that it trembled: but at this moment their attendant opened a door, and they entered a large and tolerably furnished parlour, where there was a blazing wood fire, and two lighted candles placed on a table before it.

The servant said something to Sir William, to which he gave an answer apparently of assent, she went out, and Sir William giving Ellen a chair, threw himself into another, and seemed lost in thought.

Ellen regarded him with surprise for a few moments, and at length ventured to say, “are you not well?”

At the sound of her voice Sir William started from his reverie, and said, “Well? yes, very well I believe, but I am hungry: our old lady has promised us some supper, I care not how soon she keeps her word.”

Then endeavouring to appear in spirits, he would have railied Ellen on the apprehensions

fions he said she had betrayed on the road, but his cheerfulness was evidently forced, and before the servant returned Sir William had again sunk into thoughtfulness.

It was not long before the housekeeper made her appearance, accompanied by another female, with preparations for supper, and presently after the supper was on the table.

The meal for which Sir William had expressed so much desire, was not relished by him in a manner that justified the impatience that he had shewn for its appearance—Ellen pressed him to eat, and yielding to her entreaties, he took some fowl on his plate, but Ellen observed, that the moment her eye was withdrawn, he seemed to forget that it was there, and fixed a melancholy and disturbed look upon her.

In making these observations Ellen lost all appetite also, and the supper was served and taken away without having been much diminished by either.

When the servants were gone, Sir William, shivering, drew his chair nearer the fire.

“ I

“ I am sure you are unwell,” said Ellen, anxiously, “ it is hardly possible that you should have been exposed so many hours to such weather as we were out in last night with impunity. Do you think Madam Housekeeper has no family medicine that might be of service to you? something that would make you perspire might remove all your complaints before morning.”

Sir William seemed not to hear her, and the shuddering with which he was seized had more the appearance of proceeding from emotion than from cold. Ellen felt dreadfully alarmed—she took his hand, but dropped it suddenly, startled with the burning heat which it communicated to her own: “ You are feverish—you are ill—for God’s sake let us inquire what there is in the house that it will be proper for you to take.”

“ Oh! ~~such~~ heaven and earth!” said Sir William, with a sigh from the bottom of his very soul.

“ Dear Sir William!”

“ Dear?—Oh, Ellen, no, no, no.”

Ellen

Ellen seized with an instant fear for his intellects, snatched up one of the candles, and was making toward the door.

“ What are you about ? and where would you go ?

“ I am going to seek the housekeeper ; I hope she will be able to furnish me with something that will be of service to you.”

“ And if you speak to her she will not understand you.—It is true, I am not well, I shiver, I burn, I have an intense head-ach, the effects all of a violent cold—something to make me perspire, and a good night’s rest, will set all to rights.”

“ God grant it !” said Ellen fervently.

“ There’s no doubt,” said Sir William, as he went out of the room.

He was absent nearly a quarter of an hour, which seemed almost an age to Ellen ; when he returned his looks were composed, and his air somewhat more cheerful ; he was followed by the servant whom they had first seen, who had a bowl in her hand.

“ Our

“ Our good friend there,” said Sir William, with a melancholy smile, “ has made me a mixture that she says is sovereign for a cold ; she has also prepared me a bed apart from yours, lest I should disturb you ; I will drink your health, and then let us retire to our rooms.” He took the bowl, he fixed his eye intently on Ellen for a moment,—“ Good night, “ *God bless you,*” said he with an emphasis, and raising the bowl to his mouth he drank off the contents ; but Ellen perceived that he turned deadly pale, and that his lips trembled.—Horrible apprehensions crossed the mind of Ellen, which she durst not suffer to harbour there for a moment.

“ Will not you have something warm ?” said Sir William, “ some negus ? or whey ? I did not offer you any of my potion, for though it may be salutary, it was nauseous.”

“ I think I will,” returned Ellen, “ I am cold myself, I should be glad of any thing warm.”

Sir William spoke to the woman, who instantly withdrew, and Sir William, taking Ellen’s

Ellen's hand, drew her towards the fire :—
“ you look uneasy, you look frightened, I assure you my indisposition is trifling ; I shall be well to-morrow, and then you will wonder how you came to be so much alarmed : You say *you* are cold,” added he, “ for *once* let the arms of a husband warm you.”

He snatched her to his heart, and held her there for a moment—then letting her go, as the door opened, “ Oh ! Ellen !” said he, “ why not thus for ever !”

“ For God sake tell me what all this means, either you or I *are* strangely disordered.”

“ Means!—it means justice—but come, we will talk it all over to-morrow.” Then taking a bowl from the servant, who just then presented it to Ellen, he put it to his lips, and assuming a cheerful look, ‘ Excellent white wine whey, I assure you, much better than mine—now drink my health.’

“ Heaven is my witness how sincerely I do,” said Ellen, and taking the bowl, she drank a part of what it contained ; it appeared to her what Sir William had said it was,

was, except that she thought there was some taste in it more unusual than disagreeable.

“ Now,” said Sir William, “ let us go to bed, rest will do us both good.” Then speaking to the servant, and again to Ellen, “ If you will follow the old lady, she will shew you your apartment, I know the way to mine.”

“ I wish I might accompany you thither,” said Ellen earnestly, “ if I were to see you asleep, my rest would be better.”

“ No, no, that must not be; you had too disturbed a night last night to become a watcher this: I shall want no attendants, but if it will make you easy, James shall sit up an hour or two in my room, and when I am asleep he shall let you know.”

Ellen joyfully accepted this offer, and stretching out her hand to Sir William she bade him good night. He pressed it tenderly between his, held it to his lips, and she felt a tear drop upon it, yet he spoke cheerfully and with unconcern: “ Pray lend me your watch, mine has been spoilt in last night’s overthrow, and does not go.”

Ellen

Ellen gave him her watch, and again bid him good night. He followed her to the door of the room, as if unwilling to lose sight of her, and as he turned from her she heard him sigh deeply.

Ellen following her conductor crossed the hall, from the upper end of which went a pair of stairs that led to a gallery above, in which were several doors ; the woman opened the second, on the left hand, and Ellen found herself in a spacious room, the modern furniture of which somewhat surprised her. Around the fire-place, which was well supplied with fire, were arranged her night dress, and every thing she could require in the nicest order. The woman opened a door on one side of the room, which Ellen saw was designed for her bed chamber, this also had a fire in it, and seemed to be provided with every comfort, and with many of those accommodations that Ellen could not have expected to have found in the apartment of an old Bohemian lady.

Her

Her attendant offered her service to assist in undressing her, and Ellen harassed in mind and body, was willing to take off a part of her clothes, and put on her dressing gown, but she meant not to go to bed, until she had heard something more of Sir William, and she now felt the most tormenting perplexity from not being able to explain herself to her companion, who seemed resolved not to leave her 'till she had seen her in bed.

At length it occurred to her that she might easily make her comprehend her wish to have a written paper delivered to Sir William, and she wrote these words with a pencil.

“ Pray inform my too civil attendant, that I wish her to leave me alone, and be so kind as to direct her to come to me as soon as James can inform her that you are asleep.”

The woman readily understood what she was to do with the paper, she took it, and in a few moments returned with these words from Sir William.

“ If you have any regard for my health, let the old lady see you in bed ; I promise you

she shall bring you good news of me in consequence ; but if you are left to yourself, I know you will sit up all night, and this thought will keep me waking."

Ellen in return wrote, " I acquiesce, but remember your promise."

She then suffered her attendant to assist her in going to bed ; she made the woman understand that she wished to have a light, and this being procured, the woman drew the curtains and left her.

Ellen, in her own mind, was confident that she should not close her eyes until she had heard from Sir William, such an impression had his apparent indisposition both of body and mind made upon her. But her head was scarcely laid upon her pillow before she fell into a sleep profound as death.

She awoke from this sleep with a sudden start, supposing that drowsiness had only for a few moments overcome her ; but, surprised by the kind of light that she saw in her room, which she thought could proceed from neither fire nor candle, she hastily undrew

he curtain, and was amazed and chagrined to find a meridian sun shining full upon her bed. She rose hastily, and wrapping a few clothes around her, opened the door which led into the next room, designing to go from thence to the gallery to see for somebody, of whom she could make inquiries after Sir William. On opening the door she found in the adjoining room, as if in waiting, the woman who had attended her the night before.

Ellen was proceeding to make her understand what she wanted, by earnestly repeating Sir William's name, when the woman delivered her a sealed letter, the direction of which she saw was in his hand. On the sight of this letter her heart sunk within her, as if it foretold all she had to suffer, yet at the moment she thought not of herself; she was seized with an universal trembling, the letter dropped from her hand, and she sunk almost senseless into a chair. Yet how wide were her apprehensions from the truth!—For Sir William she only feared; and yet Sir William,

with

withheld by no compassionate consideration for her, was at this moment consummating that vengeance for imagined crimes which he had been so many months in preparing with the coolest deliberation.

The woman, as if she had expected the effect that even the sight of the letter would have, ran readily to the assistance of Ellen, poured drops and water down her throat, gave her air, and seemed by the tone of her voice to exhort her to patience.

Ellen, whose mind was fixed wholly upon the draught that she had seen Sir William swallow the night before, and now convinced that the soundness of her sleep had been procured by medicine, could think only of one catastrophe, and regarding the letter with horror, had not courage to open it; the woman took it from the floor, presented it to her, and seemed to intreat her to read it.

Confused and overwhelmed as Ellen's mind was, there seemed to her something in this action of the woman's that spoke the evil not to be so bad as she had feared; she took the

letter, she broke the seal, and in the relief from the horror that had at first seized her, forgot for a few moments the extent of that misery which this letter announced to herself. The letter was as follows :

“ Summon to your support all that strength of mind which has so often given me cause to admire you. Oh ! Ellen, had it been uniform, had it sprung from principle !— But away with every vain regret ; where the guilt is certain, all compunction for the punishment should cease, and if the chastisement is heavy you will not affirm that it is disproportionate to the crime. It would, however, be useless to reproach you ; my injured love, my violated honor, cannot speak more severely than will your own heart ; and in guarding myself from the possibility of being again deceived, I wish not to inflict any unnecessary rigour.

“ When you know that I was apprised, by the conviction of my own senses, of the last

visit

visit you received from your undoer, when you are told that I read the invitation for a repetition of his visit under such forms as would elude suspicion and lay jealousy to sleep; you will not wonder that in a cause that would not admit of doubt, I have thought all explanation unnecessary; or that being convinced of having been once betrayed, I resolved upon such measures as would secure from me the possibility of a second insult.

“ In knowing that I never possessed your heart, I ought, perhaps, to have foreseen all that followed; but, deceived by the appearance of an integrity and candour which, unsupported as they were by reality, will remain I confidently believe unparalleled, the warnings of my reason were unheard, and the misgivings of my mind were disregarded.

“ How often has the semblance of a sincerity, which, had it been genuine, angels might have copied with advantage, baffled the precautions of prudence, and suspended the rod of justice? But the veil is now fallen,

and even you can delude no longer—here then let all retrospect end.

“ You need not be told how a husband ought to feel and act on such a discovery; yet the agonies you witnessed in me this night, with so much alarm, may shew you that I am not yet free from that weakness which has so long enabled you to deceive me; it may shew you, that the measures which justice and honour demand from me, are not pursued without a torture of mind equal to any I can inflict upon you. If this conviction can lighten the destiny that from henceforward awaits you, I grudge you not such an alleviation, poor, undone, miserable wretch as you are !

“ Again I entreat you to collect every power of your mind: Consider it is no single life that is at stake; suffer not any extravagance of grief, any excess of despair, to hazard an existence, of which you cannot believe you have a right to dispose of—take pity also on yourself—If you would preserve one ray of hope to gild your future life, de-

stroy

stroy not, by any extravagance of grief in the present moment, the only source from which it can proceed.

“ I expect not that a creature which must partake of my nature shall be dear to you, as was that cherished darling in which I had no part; but, if it be mine, it is also yours; let that consideration make it an object of your care, and add not the guilt of murder to those other crimes which so deeply stain your conscience.

“ This is not the upbraiding of resentment, it is the warning of friendship, take it as such, and may you be enabled to endure, with tolerable moderation, the severity of a punishment, the justice of which you will not dispute. Know then, that you will never henceforward go beyond the boundaries of that habitation in which you are now placed; but every comfort and every accommodation, and every amusement that your situation will admit, will await you there.

“ You will see the necessity I have been under of depriving you of the solace of con-

versation, and of leaving you destitute of all property; devoid of all means of influencing the feelings, or of bribing the avarice of your attendants, I have secured beyond a fear your perpetual imprisonment, and I have, by cutting off from you all hope of escape, preserved you from the continual irritation which must have attended any attempt for that purpose, which, even in circumstances more favourable to success, such is the extent of the precaution I have taken, would certainly have ended in disappointment. Nor in such a case would disappointment be all that you would incur, necessity would then induce a much more rigorous confinement, an infinitely severer restraint.

“ When you reflect how much it imports me to perpetuate a confinement that I have once begun, you will not doubt but that I have taken the precautions I speak of, nor the consequences to yourself, should you endeavour to elude them. Although unable to converse with you, you will find your attendants always respectful, attentive, and

ready

ready to administer to your wants ; you will be regularly supplied with accommodations of every kind, and if it should so happen that my attention on this head does not fulfil your wishes, you have only to write down in French any thing that you may wish to be supplied with, and you will obtain all you desire. Books, musical instruments, or materials for work, or drawing, I include in this permission ; but you will find vain any attempt to convey a letter, even to me.— Never, Oh ! never will I renew an intercourse that has cost me so much. Could I doubt I would hear you ; but if justice cannot make me happy, neither shall a weak compassion increase my misery. Resolved to punish I am henceforth deaf to the voice of penitence, and desiring to love no longer, I seek only forgetfulness !—In the hour of pain and danger, which now draws so near, you will have every assistance you can possibly desire, and you will receive in a very few days every necessary preparatory to that time, which either yourself or your infant can want.”

“ And now, most guilty and unfortunate Ellen, what more can I add?—To my regrets and my good wishes you are probably alike insensible, nor can I expect that my admonitions shall prevail, where considerations of so much more importance have failed to have their due effect.—But if it were possible that you should at last be wise, if by taking your punishment with patience, you make the best of the time that is yet allotted you for penitence, and thus make all the amends in your power for the evils you have occasioned, you will fulfil all the wishes and gratify all the desires that yet remain in the breast of your injured husband.”

CHAP. III.

— “Dona e tolle ogn’ altro ben fortuna
“ Sola in virtù non ha poftanza alcuna.”

ARIOSTO.

ELLEN read this letter with an astonishment that suspended for a time all powers of recollection or feeling ; she could neither believe nor comprehend what she read : Never once had the idea that Sir William suspected her of guilt beyond the estrangement of her affections, crossed her mind ; nor could the evidence of her senses now convince her that she was judged, condemned, and punished unheard.

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“ Where

“ Where is Sir William ? ” cried she, rushing to the door, forgetful that she spoke to those who understood her not, and thoughtless of the disorder of her dress.

The woman mistook this motion for an attempt to escape, and placing herself between Ellen and the door, endeavoured, though with respect and gentleness, to detain her.

“ Let me go,” said Ellen, struggling, “ let me see Sir William—I implore you to let me see Sir William.”

The woman shook her head, in token of the impossibility of compliance, and again she offered her the letter, which Ellen had a second time let fall to the ground. On this opposition from her attendant, a sudden recollection struck Ellen ;—she remembered that she spoke in vain, and that her present efforts were probably misunderstood. Again she read the letter, but she read it with nearly as little comprehension of the contents as before.

Totally

Totally ignorant of the circumstances on which she had been condemned, and sure of her own innocence, she could not believe that Sir William could think her guilty ; she could not believe that, unheard, he could punish her as guilty.

As she continued to read, she looked for some hidden sense to words, that she could not conceive to be used in that which was obvious. When she came to the expression, “From henceforward you will never go beyond the boundaries of the habitation in which you are now placed,” she looked towards the high windows, and around the room, with an air at once wild and thoughtful ; then covering her face with her hands, she endeavoured to collect her senses, and be assured that she did not dream.

Again she turned to peruse the letter ; and to weigh every syllable of it ; but she had read it many times before she was able to give it credit as a reality, or was awakened to a full sense of her true situation. At length, convinced that Sir William was gone, and

that he had consigned her to perpetual imprisonment, she rested persuaded that her case was as hopeless as it was miserable.

But even under this overwhelming conviction, Ellen did not forsake herself; she needed not Sir William's exhortations to shun all excesses in her grief, and every undue and unbecoming violence. Stunned rather than roused, afflicted rather than irritated, the first recollection of her real situation, which was sufficiently perfect to form any resolution upon, was followed by a determination to do nothing which could be injurious to her child, or disgraceful to herself. But it was not on her own strength that she relied for power to bear up under such a load of hopeless misery.

The woman, who had remained an attentive but forgotten spectator of all her movements, saw her with surprise rise from her chair with an air of dignified humility, and prostrating herself upon her knees, continue for some moments in fervent prayer.

When

When she arose she cast her eyes upon the woman, and appeared to see her for the first time. She advanced towards her, and with a mild and complacent aspect held out her hand towards her ; seeming by this action to bespeak her friendship, and to declare her own submission. The woman, struck and moved by her manner and look, could not forbear raising the hand that was offered her to her lips, and then immediately presenting her with some of her clothes, endeavoured to make her understand how ready she should be to serve her. From this moment it seemed as if a treaty of amity was sealed between them, and Ellen felt something like hope revive in her bosom.

When Ellen was dressed, her attendant opened the door of a room, which was opposite to the one that led to the bed chamber, and invited Ellen to enter it. Ellen found this room much larger than either the dressing room or bed-chamber, and casting her eyes round it, saw in the manner in which it was furnished, a sad certainty of the intended length of her captivity.

Two bookcases, which, with the books they contained, seemed to be new, and recently put up, filled the large recesses on each side of the fire; a harpsichord, which also appeared to be new, stood on one side of the room; near it was placed a harp; a writing table, furnished with all the materials necessary for writing, stood near the fire; a sofa, and one or two chairs, of different forms and dimensions, providing as it were for the varied accommodation of an individual, with one or two more tables, made up the furniture. The room was fitted up with striped linen, and there seemed diffused over the whole an air of cheerfulness that suited ill with the sadness of Ellen's soul. Hitherto she had not shed a tear; on beholding an apartment so evidently prepared for her solitary prison, she burst into a passion of weeping, and threw herself on the sofa, in an agony of mind not to be described.

The calmness which she had hitherto preserved, arose more from the flunng nature
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of the blow she had received, and the natural temper and acquired habits of her mind, than from any fortitude that she had yet been able to assume upon the present occasion. Suddenly and irresistibly the recollection of English friends and English joys rushed upon her heart, and the sense of their misery in the loss of her, and her's in the loss of them, formed a mingled torture, of so acute a kind, as for a time overcame all her sense of the duty of resignation, and all her fears for the safety of her child. Agitated by convulsive twitchings, almost choaked by her rising sobs, she lay for some time in a state of the most alarming disorder.

Her new friend, not more terrified than grieved for the situation in which she saw her, mingled so much genuine compassion in her attempts to relieve and calm her, that Ellen, upon whom the voice of kindness was never lost, and whom death alone could hold long insensible to the emotions of gratitude, began in pity to what another felt, to still the loud complainings of her own affliction.

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She became composed and silent, patiently took what was offered her, and returning after some interval to perfect calmness, she shewed so earnest a desire to be left alone, that the compassionate Mrs. Ulric at length complied.

Ellen, left to herself, wept without restraint and without measure, and this free indulgence of nature saved her overcharged heart from breaking. Her mind glanced hopefully on the compassion that she saw she had excited in her attendant, and she began to believe it would not be difficult to win her over to her wishes.

She wished but to be able to write to Sir William, secure, could she once induce him to come to an explanation, that she must convince him of her innocence. The rigour of his dealings towards her were all founded on error, and hence, those passages of his letter which had at first given her the most poignant distress, now inspired her with hope. Were I the victim of his hatred, (thought Ellen) no justification would avail me: but

while

while I am a sufferer only from his mistaken ideas of justice, in establishing my innocence, I shall put an end to my misfortunes. It seemed so easy to prove this innocence to any one with whom she could speak, that the most bitter of her regrets at this moment was her incapacity to converse with Mrs. Ulric.

This tender-hearted woman returned in a few hours to Ellen's apartment, bringing with her a nicely prepared meal, of which she pressed Ellen with so much kindness to partake, that she could not wholly refuse her—but Ellen could not eat: Mrs. Ulric, however, induced her to drink a glass of wine, and again left her to herself.

The close of this melancholy day now came on, and from those changes to which the mind in the first stages of affliction is subject, grief seemed to return with fresh force, as the shades of evening overspread the apartment; nor was her grief wholly unmixed with a degree of terror. Frightful images arose in her mind, and she scarcely dared trust herself with considering, to what means

means so violent as those already taken by Sir William might ultimately lead. But these unfounded fears arose wholly from the shattered state of her nerves—the benevolent countenance of Mrs. Ulric, illuminated by the light of two candles, with which she presently entered the room, dissipated them in an instant, and Ellen easily admitted the folly of tormenting herself with imaginary evils, when she had so many real ones to deplore.

The fatigues that Ellen had undergone for three days had entirely exhausted her strength, and she readily yielded to the signs by which she understood Mrs. Ulric to desire her to go to bed. When there, weariness so overcame affliction, that if she found no refreshment, she at least received rest.—Her mind was so full of her project of making Mrs. Ulric her friend, that in studying for means to explain herself to her, she lost a part of the sense of what made such an explanation desirable. She was resolved also, to endeavour the next morning to inspect every

every part of her prison, both as a matter of curiosity, and as a means to ascertain what degree of indulgence would be allowed her.

Her sleep, as it was broken, so it was short; she arose early, and looking for her watch, now recollecting, for the first time, by what artifice Sir William had deprived her of it; she easily comprehended his reason for such a procedure, and was not therefore surprised upon feeling in her pockets to find her purse gone, and every trinket, of however trifling a value, except the picture of her father, which was set very plainly in gold.

On the sight of a countenance, which never bent its regards towards her but with looks of the fondest love, now never more to be beheld by her, her whole frame shook with disorder, and her heart swelled almost to bursting.

“ My father,” cried she, and pressed the picture to her lips—“ My father!” repeated she, “ Now in vain do I call to you for help; now,

now, in my uttermost distress, impotent to save."

Despair stopt her tongue.

" Oh ! God," cried she, kneeling down, " be thou my father ; thou canst burst the walls of this prison—thou canst restore me to all I hold dear—to reputation, to friendship, to happiness ;—Thou canst do more, thou canst teach me to endure with patience perpetual imprisonment, never ending deprivation—let it be as thou wilt."

This act of pious resignation calmed the hurried passions of Ellen ; again she pressed her father's picture to her lips, and felt an emotion of gratitude to Sir William for having left her so precious a relique.

CHAP. IV.

“ There’s some ill planet reigns ;
“ I must be patient ‘till the heavens look
“ With an aspect more favorable.”

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN Mrs. Ulric attended, she found Ellen dressed, and apparently perfectly composed. Mrs. Ulric withdrew with intention of preparing breakfast, and Ellen took an accurate survey of her apartment. She found, in addition to the three rooms which she had seen, two closets that belonged to her bed chamber; one dark and the other light. The windows of her bed chamber and dressing-room were both too high to allow

of

of any thing being seen from thence, except when standing close to them ; she saw they looked upon a garden, which, as far as she could discern, was walled round ; beyond it she could see only woods, that appeared to extend far into the country.— The windows of the room which seemed to be allotted for her sitting-room, were lower than those in the other rooms, and appeared to have been newly put in ; they opened into the court-yard by which she had entered, and as the window of the light closet looked out upon the open country, Ellen comprehended that her apartment occupied one intire side of the building. The window of this closet was too high to look from, except when standing upon a chair or table, and was so small that Ellen could not have got her head through it ; the country that could be seen from it appeared wild and desolate.

Ellen felt it a matter of great importance to herself, whether she should be allowed the liberty to pass beyond this apartment, or whether

whether it was indeed the limits of her confinement, she was resolved to know.

When Mrs. Ulric, who had attended her at breakfast, was removing the tea equipage, Ellen arose, and went towards the door of her apartment ; Mrs. Ulric instantly put down what she had in her hand, opened the door of the room, and seemed to invite Ellen to enter the gallery ; Ellen complied, and Mrs. Ulric going before her, shewed her the rooms that were opposite those she inhabited. Some of these appeared to be occupied by servants, and some not to be occupied at all ; and Ellen thought she understood that one belonged to Mrs. Ulric ; the furniture was scanty, and miserably old, and ill corresponded with that which she had seen in her own apartment.

From the gallery she descended to the hall, and the first object that caught her eye was the door by which she had entered it, through the long passage that led to the outer court. This was now closed, and fastened by a heavy wooden bar that was placed across it. She

went into the parlour where she had been received the night of her arrival ; it was gloomy, and by several things that lay about she concluded it was the place where Mrs. Ulric usually sat. The remembrance how she had been betrayed into her present situation rushed powerfully on her mind, and she hastily quitted a place which called to her recollection circumstances she could not bear to think of.

Returning to the hall, she made towards a door which she then first perceived. Mrs. Ulric stepping before, shewed her that it opened into the offices, but directed her attention to one opposite ; she opened that too, and Ellen found, with great satisfaction, that it led immediately to the garden. Mrs. Ulric, as if yielding to the desire Ellen shewed to enter it, made way, and respectfully retiring, suffered Ellen to walk out alone.

Her heart bounded when she found she was mistress of such a privilege, and she felt herself half at liberty. She traversed the gardens

gardens with a kind of wild tumultuous hope of immediate escape, but she was soon convinced of what indeed her reason, if this had been a moment when reason could have been attended to, would have told her before, that every avenue was securely closed.

The garden was spacious, and seemed to be laid out more for use than pleasure; yet at the greatest distance from the house there were some retired and shady places, that would afford no unpleasant retreat, in such weather as makes the cooler air preferable to the house.

Many parts of the walls were old, and it appeared as if the new building that connected them together did not follow the line of any former wall that might have been destroyed. From this circumstance Ellen concluded that the compass of the garden had been lessened; at one sharp angle, however, the meeting lines of which were formed of walls equally old, she discovered a small door; it was very massive, and though extremely old, retained great

strength ; upon it was a lock, but the fastening of the door did not seem to depend upon that. Ellen tried to shake it, but found it perfectly steady. As well as she could judge from its position, it must open immediately upon the country, and poor Ellen stood for some minutes opposite to it, fixed in a deep and melancholy reverie, and so lost in thought, that she knew not that it was the hope of escape through that door, that wholly absorbed her faculties.

Starting from this temporary stupor, she continued her search, but finding no other spot in the whole circumference of the garden, from which it was possible that she should escape, she returned again to the door, again surveyed it with the greatest accuracy, again tried to shake it upon its hinges, and again found all her efforts ineffectual.

It was impulse rather than reason (as the new caught bird flutters around its cage) that had occasioned Ellen to make this search. Had it been attended with the

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discovery of an immediate means of escape, Ellen was in no condition to have availed herself of it, and must have declined, upon reflection, to make use of it.

Her present circumstances, which made walking any distance impossible ; her total want of money, her intire ignorance of the language of the country, would have made it madness to have attempted an escape, while there remained any hope of inducing Sir William to do her justice. On winning Mrs. Ulric to her cause she rested all her real hopes and rational expectations of deliverance, and she determined not to lose a moment in making the experiment.

Being returned to her apartment, she sat down with the design of forming that letter, which she hoped to be able to prevail upon Mrs. Ulric to deliver ; but upon reperusing Sir William's, to determine upon the best manner in which to enter upon her defence, she found herself entirely at a loss. The circumstances on which he grounded her condemnation were entirely unknown to her,

the conviction under which he seemed to write, that she must herself acknowledge her guilt, as it took away every uncertainty upon which explanation could be founded, so it appeared to make all explanation impossible.

But when she attended to the precise act of criminality with which she was charged, in the words, “I was apprised by the evidence of my own senses of the last visit you received from your undoer,” a suspicion found place in her mind that had not before entered it.

Ellen had never seen Henry (for that he was meant by her undoer she had no doubt) since they parted in Devonshire. He had attended her to her carriage at the hour of her departure, and he had assisted her into it, in the presence of Sir William, of several servants, and of many other people. This attendance could hardly be called a visit; and if it could, it was not possible to fix the stain of guilt upon it, nor could it be necessary that Sir William should apprise her, as a

piece

piece of information that must overwhelm her with shame and confusion, that he had witnessed it. This she knew well, and she could neither have had the power, nor a motive to conceal it; but as she was perfectly convinced that no subsequent interview had taken place between them, and as from the circumstance of her having withdrawn into the country, before Mr. Villars arrived in town, she thought Sir William must be as well convinced of this as herself; she began to suspect that Sir William, so far from being deceived, sought only to deceive her—that, delivered up to his resentment, on being persuaded that he should never be able to touch her heart, he had resolved to punish that as a crime in her which he felt to be so severe a misfortune to himself. His saying, that he had seen that which she was entirely clear in her own mind he never could have seen, confirmed this idea, and made her conclude that he only sought to colour an act of extreme

cruelty and revenge with the thin veil of justice.

These ideas filled her with despair. She had placed her hopes of redress upon the belief that her justification would be as acceptable to Sir William as advantageous to herself. But now she began to think that her greatest difficulty would not be in prevailing upon Mrs. Ulric to deliver her letter, but in inducing Sir William to give it a candid reading. His prohibition to write to him—his declaration that he wished only for forgetfulness—his acknowledgement that the voice of penitence would plead in vain, all concurred to make it evident that he wished not to have her innocence established.

“ It is hatred and revenge that have placed me here,” said she, the tears running down her cheeks, “ and it would be in vain to hope for my deliverance from tenderness and love.”

Her thoughts hastily returned to the garden—again she reconsidered the walls of

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it, their height, their solidity, precluded every hope of escape that way. Her own helpless state, even could she get out, now also rushed across her mind ; to owe her deliverance to her own powers she felt was impossible, and as she would not neglect any possible chance of putting an end to her sorrows, she finally resolved, notwithstanding her hopelessness of its success, to try the effect of a letter to Sir William.—Thus she wrote :

“ I address you not as a penitent, not as an object of your love, I appeal only to your justice. I am innocent. Never, even in thought, have I wandered from the duty that I owe you ; of this you will some time be convinced. If, therefore, you have any consideration for the future peace of your mind, wait not for this conviction until my injuries are past redress.

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“ I beseech you let me understand the particulars of my accusation, that I may be able to clear myself even from suspicion.—To the present unintelligible charge that you bring against me, I can only repeat that I am innocent. If you will condescend to explain yourself to me, I can prove myself so. I know of no visit, I am conscious of no invitation, that can fix the slightest stigma upon my name, of none that I would not avow in the face of the whole world. I cannot comprehend what you mean. I suppress, however, all complaint; I am willing to believe that you have acted upon a mistake, and if you will only permit me to see and to converse with you, I am confident I shall lose at once all cause and all inclination to complain.”

Having finished this letter, she resolved to assail Mrs. Ulric with all her powers when next she saw her—nor was the opportunity long wanting. This compassionate woman,

whose

whose heart was ill suited to the task assigned her, was not able to absent herself long from her unfortunate prisoner, lest some consolation might be wanting that she could afford. She entered the room, bringing with her some biscuits and a cup of chocolate; for Ellen, with all her efforts, had not been able to swallow a morsel at breakfast.

Ellen took the refreshment that was offered her with a smile, put a part of one of the biscuits in her mouth, and tasted the chocolate, but she could do no more—her heart swelled, and tears ran down her cheeks. Mrs. Ulric looked on her with compassion, and sought to soothe her.

Ellen seized her hand, and pressing it fervently to her lips, “Oh! if you could be induced to assist me!” said she. The tone of these words seemed to penetrate the heart of Mrs. Ulric—she too wept. The moment seemed favourable, and Ellen holding out the letter to her, looked in her face with a countenance of entreaty that could not be

misunderstood ; it was perfectly intelligible to Mrs. Ulric, but she put the letter back with her hand, and shook her head in token of refusal.

“ Let me prevail,” said Ellen, joining her hands together.

Mrs. Ulric withdrew a few steps.

“ I have no hope if you deny me,” said Ellen, and threw herself on her knees before her.

Greatly moved, Mrs. Ulric stooped hastily to raise her.

Again Ellen offered her the letter, but Mrs. Ulric withdrew her hand, and walked toward the door.

“ Have you no pity ?” said Ellen.

The moving tones of her voice seemed to subdue Mrs. Ulric—she returned—she raised Ellen to the sofa—she took the letter—but opening the drawer of the writing-table, she deposited the letter there, locked the drawer, and gave Ellen the key.

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The calm decision of this action robbed Ellen of every hope ; she sat for some moments a motionless image of despair—the blood forsook her lips, and she scarcely breathed : Mrs. Ulric approached her, she kneeled down before her ; she took her hand, and respectfully kissed it. She seemed to say, “ Unhappy I am that I cannot do as you wish me.”

Ellen was not insensible, even to this degree of kindness. “ Cruel Sir William !” exclaimed she, “ had you but allowed me to have been understood, how easily should I have worked upon this worthy woman to have befriended me ! But you have, indeed, taken your measures securely ; you have indeed known how to make my ruin complete.”

Ellen wept bitterly as she pronounced these words, and Mrs. Ulric seemed so affected, that Ellen resolved to make one more effort to prevail on her to receive her letter. But, as she was about to unlock
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the drawer, Mrs. Ulric perceiving her intention, placed her hand upon it, and evidently shewed her that the attempt would be in vain, and Ellen at length persuaded that Mrs. Ulric was inexorable only from what she considered as a principle of duty, finally gave up the contest.

CHAP. V.

—“ If powers divine
“ Behold our human actions (*as they do*)
“ I doubt not then but innocence shall make
“ False accusation blush, and tyranny
“ Tremble at patience.”

SHAKESPEARE.

MRS. ULRIC had not the shadow of a doubt of Ellen's guilt. Sir William had made it clear to her by a detail of circumstances that seemed to admit but of one explanation. His own distress, the tender consideration which, even in preparing the punishment, he had manifested for every possible consolation to be administered to Ellen not incompatible with that punish-

ment, had convinced Mrs. Ulric of the sincerity of his love, and the bitterness of his regret, for the measures that he thought himself obliged to pursue; these circumstances, joined with the agonies which she had witnessed in him, when the moment at last came of delivering Ellen into her hands, left her not a suspicion but that a certainty that Ellen was no longer deserving of his love, could be alone his motive, for withdrawing it.

There were two points in which Sir William knowingly deceived Mrs. Ulric. He had represented to her that even in the punishment to which he had doomed Ellen, he had been actuated by motives of mercy—that a much severer fate awaited her from the customs of her own country, and from the indignation of her parents; and if he were to deliver her to them, not only imprisonment would be her lot, but an imprisonment of a much more rigorous kind, aggravated by darkness, fasting, and stripes.

Mrs.

Mrs. Ulric did not therefore consider Sir William only as one of the most injured and unfortunate of men, but as one of the most compassionate and worthy. This deceit had been suggested from a knowledge of Mrs. Ulric's character, who would never have consented to have become an instrument of so much injustice, as was attached to Sir William's conduct, even in the case of Ellen's actual guilt ; but acting under the error into which she had been betrayed, although the mild and winning manners of Ellen, with the graces of her person, and the misery of her situation, made the heart of Mrs. Ulric overflow with the softest compassion, yet did she not look upon her as punished more than her crimes deserved, or feel inclined to do ought toward restoring her to the confidence of a husband, whom she believed she had so grievously injured.

In another particular also Sir William had misled Mrs. Ulric, and from something of a similar motive, wishing by accumulated proofs of Ellen's guilt to take away the possibility

fibility at any future moment of her being able to fix any blame upon him in the mind of a person on whose fidelity he was, after all his precautions, obliged to depend for the final accomplishment of his purposes.

He had therefore signified to Mrs. Ulric, that the child of which Ellen was then big, was the offspring of that guilty love, which she was now to expiate by perpetual imprisonment. It therefore happened, that Mrs. Ulric never looked upon Ellen, but that she thought she saw an irrefragable proof of her crime; and every effort Ellen made to prove her innocence, Mrs. Ulric considered only as attempts either to move compassion, or as shews of penitence.

This Mrs. Ulric had indeed been the personal servant of the Bohemian lady, whom Sir William represented her to Ellen as having served; but this lady was now dead, nor had she inhabited the house where Ellen now was for many years before her death.—It belonged to the nobleman her son, the intimate friend of Sir William, and, in the

present

present circumstances, his only confidant. To him Sir William had communicated first his suspicions of Ellen's infidelity, and afterwards his certainty of it; and by him had been suggested the idea of the nature of the punishment to be inflicted. He had pointed out the eligibility of this decayed and solitary mansion for the purposes of a prison, and he had represented, that in the tried faith and gentle manners of Mrs. Ulric he would find such a jailor as he desired; all he had to do was to convince her of the justice and mercy of the plan proposed, and he might rely upon her integrity without a fear. She was, when Sir William's friend recommended her to him, entirely dependent upon and supported by his bounty, and he knew would willingly undertake any charge with which he would intrust her, that did not militate against her ideas of rectitude.

Sir William had resolved, in consequence of what he believed he had ascertained, during his visit in Devonshire, to have removed

moved Ellen abroad immediately after she was sufficiently recovered from her lying-in to bear such a journey.

But Ellen's conduct in her requisition to leave town, so seemingly the result of the purest integrity, had staggered Sir William's before firm belief in her guilt, and had determined him to make one experiment as to what her residence in the country would produce. He had been perfectly persuaded that the child was not his, and hence his evident dislike to him when alive, and the satisfaction which he had suffered to escape him on his death. But there had been such an unjustifiable brutality in his expression on that occasion, and the effect it had on Ellen was so grievous, that there was nothing that he would not have done to have effaced the impression it had made.

The placability of Ellen's temper had softened his heart. He began to believe he had been misled by an unfounded jealousy—he began to hope that mutual love might spring up between them, and he had nearly forgotten

forgotten all his schemes of revenge and chastisement, when the accidental discovery of Henry escaping over the hedge of the garden drove from his mind all doubt of the guilt and all moderation in the punishment of it.

From this moment his whole thoughts were turned to concealing and perfecting the designs which he was now resolute to prosecute to the utmost; and to this purpose might be referred every thing that he had done from the moment in which he announced to Ellen his intentions of quitting England, to that in which he had followed her with his eyes for the last time.

Often indeed had the force of his emotions been too strong for his hypocrisy, but Ellen having no clue to guide her suspicions aright, he had escaped detection. She had considered what was indeed the breaking forth of his future design, but as the remains of a jealousy with which she was but too well acquainted, and for which she sometimes hoped a cure from time, and the undeviating

ating prudence of her own conduct; and for which, at others, she was sadly persuaded there was no cure possible.

Often had the fair and candid soul of Ellen, which appeared in her every action, made him mistrust what he thought was the evidence of his own senses: but the conviction that that he owed his present persuasion only to such evidence, dispelled every doubt, and so fully settled his belief of the falsehood of Ellen, that he could as soon have called in question his own existence as her guilt.

Having communicated his final resolves to his friend, many steps preparatory to the execution of his plan had been taken before his arrival in Saxony, and Ellen's imprisonment was to have commenced with the winter; but when Sir William unexpectedly found her with child, at a time when he could not doubt but that the child was his, his former desire for an heir to his estate, which had had so large a share in his determination to marry, returned with fresh force to his mind. But to give a public legiti-

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macy to the infant that Ellen would bring, it was necessary that she should be known to have been with child, nor must the date of her pretended death take place so early as to make it impossible that the child, who was sometime to be produced, could be hers.

These considerations prolonged to Ellen the term of her liberty; but though the circumstances of her pregnancy might delay the time of her being shut up, it would in the end facilitate the plan. It was only by a feigned tale of her death that he could hope to put a stop to the enquiries of her English friends; and there was no incident upon which he could find such a tale with equal appearance of probability, as one so frequently attended by the most sudden and fatal catastrophe. The dangerous state to which Ellen had been reduced in her first lying-in would contribute to establish the credit of the pretended event of the second.

It was therefore settled between Sir William and his friend, that she should remain at Dresden until within three months of the
expected

expected time of her lying-in, that Sir William should then remove to the Saxon village, that he might be sufficiently near the place of her intended confinement, to satisfy himself that every preparation necessary for it was executed to his wishes; and it was agreed, that when she was within a very short period of the time of her being to be brought to be bed, she should, under pretence of beginning her journey to Vienna, be conducted thither.

The tale that Sir William meant to tell was, that being seized unexpectedly with the pains of labour, at an obscure inn, on the road to Vienna, she had there expired.

Sir William had some fears that the agitation and grief which Ellen would unavoidably undergo, when she found the heavy destiny that awaited her through the rest of her life, might prove prejudicial to the safety of the child; but he had also almost equal hopes that the consideration of this circumstance might operate to inspiring her with a greater degree of patience, than she would

would otherwise be able to assume. And these hopes, that were founded upon the excellence of Ellen's character, were not vain.

It was Sir William's intention to linger near the spot of Ellen's confinement until she was brought to bed, and when he was informed of the consequences of that event, then to dismiss her from his solicitude for ever, and make all the advance he could in the road of forgetfulness.

That no circumstance might hereafter obtrude Ellen upon his memory, he gave his friend, on whose integrity he had a perfect reliance, power to draw upon him for any sum necessary to defray the expences of her establishment; and he appointed an agent at Dresden, who was to be paid by the Bohemian nobleman, to furnish every thing that Ellen might require. To authenticate her requisitions, which he had signified to her were to be written in French, nothing more was necessary than the signature of Mrs. Ulric.

Mrs. Ulric had therefore no immediate intercourse with Sir William, and had she been inclined to have favored Ellen's cause, she would not only have had Sir William's resentment to have overcome, but the reluctance of her late master, who she knew concurred in all that Sir William had done, and applauded the justice and mercy of his proceedings.

Mrs. Ulric had been directed to inform Sir William, through the channel of this nobleman, how Ellen bore the first shock of her misfortune; and however favorable this report might be, it was very unlikely that the friend of Sir William should take any step towards reconciling him to a wife, of whose guilt he was perfectly satisfied.

Mrs. Ulric had made a faithful representation of Ellen's mildness, moderation, and patience; but imputing the whole to penitence, she led both Sir William and his friend to believe that Ellen had been sufficiently explicit in the marks of this contrition, to furnish, if that had been necessary, fresh proofs

proofs of her former guilt. Sir William, therefore, however miserable, was far from repenting the step he had taken. He had truly said, “I am deaf to the voice of penitence.” To forgive was not in his nature, and nothing but the conviction of Ellen’s innocence would have induced him to have restored her to liberty, and from this conviction he was farther removed than ever.

CHAP. VI.

“ Stone walls do not a prison make,
“ Nor iron bars a cage ;
“ Minds innocent and quiet, take
“ That for a hermitage.”

LOVELACE.

WHEN Ellen found all the hopes which she had entertained vain, of being able to move Mrs. Ulric in her favour, she began to turn her thoughts upon some other individual that might probably make a part of the household.

She had hitherto seen only one other person, and she soon found that the house contained no more ; this was a hale stout country girl,

girl, with an open good-humoured countenance ; and though the being totally without the means of applying to the interested feelings of such an one was an obstacle to her success, that, in circumstances which admitted of any other hope, Ellen would have considered as invincible—her's was not a situation where even great difficulties ought to discourage her, and she resolved to make the attempt. She hoped, by the courtesy of her manners, to conciliate the girl's good-will, and she sometimes flattered herself that precaution had not been so unremittingly awake as to have extended to an ignorant girl, whom it was known she could not bribe, the prohibition as to receiving any letter from her hands ; she had no doubt but that she, like Mrs. Ulric, spoke only German, and had therefore no hope of moving her by argument.

By having attended closely to the words Mrs. Ulric always used to herself, when she sought to induce her to any compliance, she thought herself mistress of one phrase of in-

treaty in a language that would be understood; and armed with this piece of rhetoric, and a letter in her hand, she one day accosted the damsel. But what was her astonishment, and almost horror, when with a broad stare of incomprehension she was answered in sounds more uncouth and unintelligible than had ever before met her ears!

Ellen shrunk back, and hope died within her when she found this fresh impediment to the success of her plans; for she easily comprehended that the girl was a true-born Bohemian, and spoke only her native Sclavonian.

The many plans that Ellen had laid to gain the attention of this girl, and the various schemes that she had adopted and rejected as likely means, or as being impossible to engage her compassion, and explain her own wishes to her, had so fully occupied her mind for some days, that she had had less leisure to reflect upon her actual situation. In the hopes of liberty she lost, for a time, a sense of her restraint, and when, by the discovery

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of the impossibility of making the girl comprehend her, these hopes seemed to shrink to nothing, a new, and even a more lively interest prevented her from feeling the whole weight of her disappointment.

She had received those preparations for her approaching indisposition that Sir William had promised her in his letter, and she busied herself in arranging every thing relative to that period. This subject being fully in her mind, she naturally reverted to the ray of hope which Sir William himself seemed to allow the birth of a child afforded her. She endeavoured to discover the true meaning of the words he had used.

It was evident that he was persuaded the child was his own, and under this persuasion it was but too likely he would not suffer it to remain in her care. In the case of its being removed from her, what hope could spring from its existence to gild her future life? When Sir William had once announced her death to her friends, (and by a story of her death she naturally concluded he could

alone conceal her imprisonment), he had put it out of his own power, without affixing an indelible reproach upon himself, to restore her to the world; and however probable she might think it that he would defer such an annunciation till after the expected period of her lying-in, which was well known to her English friends, as a security against any doubt of the legitimacy of the child he might produce, yet she felt it nearly impossible that he should delay it longer. What good then could she derive from becoming the mother of an infant, who, under these suppositions, would be ignorant of her very existence?

If Sir William therefore really foresaw any advantage possible to accrue to her from the birth of the child, it must be his having determined, under some circumstances, to leave it to her care. But when she recalled the earnest wish which he had formerly expressed for an heir, and the very evident care he took to preserve the existence of the unborn infant, she could not for a moment indulge

and

a hope

a hope that this would be the case if the child were a boy. The hope, therefore, that in so doubtful a manner he had endeavoured to inspire her with, seemed to rest upon one of these two suppositions: either that he had suggested it merely as a means to quiet the first excesses of her grief, without any intention of its being followed by any real good to her; or, that if the child proved a girl, he did in truth purpose to leave her in possession of it. To this latter possibility she clung with a fond partiality, as to the only source of happiness that remained to her on this side the grave.

The more she considered the matter, the more she persuaded herself that this was probable; and the more it appeared probable, the more it became necessary to her. Soon her mind could admit of no other idea. The gloom of the prison seemed to clear up, its solitude to disappear; wherever she turned her eyes, this little girl was before her; she saw it in the helpless fatuity of the first weeks of its life; she marked the

first smile of intelligence that sparkled in its eyes; she beheld the first symptoms of design in its actions; she heard the first half-formed articulate sound that escaped from its lips; in imagination she began the task of instruction, and beheld her most arduous efforts repaid a thousand fold, by having gained a companion and a friend.

If such an illusory progression of but too often unrealised bliss fills the breast of every tender and reflecting female when about to become a mother, and communicates a sense of happiness, unfelt and unimagined in every other circumstance, even in the most prosperous life, with what trembling transport must the desolated Ellen contemplate a blessing that would be her only one! How must she prize a possession that was to be her *all* of joy! And how must her heart grow cold as she thought this blessing might be withheld from her—that this possession might be snatched from her arms!

But that all this fabric of happiness should depend upon the sex of her child, when her

heart was disposed to love equally a boy or girl, pointed to her apprehension the peculiar wretchedness of her fate, the circumstances of which could suspend the most natural affections of the soul, and render it doubtful whether a mother should view the face of her offspring with pleasure.

A short period brought the matter to an issue, and Ellen was delivered of a daughter. Ellen clasped the infant to her heart, and forgot for a moment her captivity ; the next she feared to lose what she so highly prized. Those reasonings, which had before appeared so conclusively to ensure her the undisturbed possession of a daughter, now seemed weak and unsatisfactory—she doubted where she had before been certain, she feared where she had hoped.

In the meantime she recovered her health much faster than could have been hoped ; and fully occupied in nursing her little girl, the days passed easily. She began to believe that Sir William had ceased to think either of her or his child, and trusting in the vicis-

situde which time always produces, she soothed her mind with the distant hope that a period would arrive when she should be restored to those she loved.

Could she have found any means of informing her family and friends of her situation, she would have been far from feeling her present lot as an unhappy one; it was the thought of what they would suffer on her supposed death that at this time formed her bitterest reflections. Removed from the perpetual ill humour and injurious suspicions of Sir William, mistress of her time and her employments, holding in her arms, or nourishing at her breast the dear object of her tenderest affections, she experienced a degree of calm satisfaction that had long been a stranger to her mind—that mind unclouded by self-reproach, undistracted by selfish solicitudes, reposed itself in peace on the protection of a Providence, whose wisdom it could not doubt, and of whose goodness it was assured.

Three months were now fully passed since the birth of Ellen's daughter, and to the partial apprehensions of the mother she was already become a very interesting companion. Ellen believed, or thought she believed, that there were none of her actions that the child did not understand ; and she more than repaid the compliment by undoubtedly understanding all that the child did.

Eilen now wanted no other companion. To Mary she talked, and to Mary she sung ; she held her in her arms all day, and when she had placed her in her crib for the night, she drew her chair close to it, and with her eyes fixed more upon the face of the child, than upon the book which she held in her hand, imagined that she read. The fear that her treasure should be snatched from her, now seldom obtruded itself ; every passing day took away from the probability of its being realized ; if it occurred, she was tempted to consider it as an ungrateful doubting of the benevolence of Providence, and she repressed as faulty all thoughts that led to it.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

“ Oh you blessed ministers above,
“ Keep me in patience !”

SHAKESPEARE.

IN this state of contentment and security was Ellen, when one morning, as she was engaged in sucking her child, Mrs. Ulric entered: Ellen raised her eyes towards her, and was immediately struck with the sadness of her countenance. Ellen, who in holding her child in her arms, felt that all the treasure she had on earth was secure, thought not of herself; she held out her hand to Mrs. Ulric, and longed for words to inquire into the

the cause of her grief, and to offer her consolation ; but, alas ! she was herself the true object of compassion. Mrs. Ulric sat down by her side ; she sighed, and taking the infant from her, delivered her a letter.

Ellen cast her eyes on the superscription ; she knew Sir William's hand, and she anticipated in a moment all that he had to say to her : the blood forsook her lips ; she became sick, and her whole frame trembled so extremely, that it was with difficulty she opened the letter ;—these were its contents :—

“ I am willing to persuade myself that my present design will meet with a ready acquiescence from you. The person who delivers this letter, has orders to take charge of my daughter ; she will be conveyed to me with every solicitous attention to her safety and convenience, that you could yourself dictate. I believe, that as your good sense will withhold you from any opposition to this plan, which you must be convinced will ultimately prove fruitless, so I am persuaded that your humanity is such, as to take from you all selfish desire

desire to make this innocent victim of your misconduct, a partaker of your punishment. When separated from you, she will be in the full enjoyment of every blessing a father's affection can bestow, and you surely cannot but wish that her cheek may for ever remain untinged by a sense of your shame, and her heart unwounded by a knowledge of your afflictions. If your heart sadden with the thought that you will never behold her more, be consoled by the assurance that from this period I shall promote her happiness even at the expence of my own. For a measure so consonant to the best interests of your offspring, no apology appears necessary ; and for the manner in which I see proper to dispose of my own, I do not conceive I owe you any : With every wish however for the perfect restoration of peace to your bosom, I now bid you finally and for ever farewell."

"Never, never," said Ellen, wildly snatching the infant from Mrs. Ulric, "will I part with my child ; go, go and tell his agent so.

Together

Together they may force us from this place,
but never shall they separate us!"

Mrs. Ulric was prepared for the tears and grief of Ellen ; but the wildness of her air, and the determined tone of her voice surprised and disconcerted her.

" Ah ! Madam," said she, " would you have this poor innocent remain a perpetual prisoner with you ?"

As she spoke, she fixed her eyes upon the child with a look of the tenderest compassion. The sound of her voice, and her action smote upon Ellen's heart ; she burst into tears.

" No," rejoined Mrs. Ulric, " you are too good," and she attempted to take the child from her ; but Ellen clasping it to her breast, rushed into the next room, and fastened the door. Here, in a tumult of passion, which for some time suspended every power of reason, Ellen wept over her infant in all the bitterness of distraction and despair. But in the abodes where virtue is accustomed to preside, the usurpation of passion can be of no long duration. Ellen was not so lost in self as to forget her

her child; and no sooner did her heart acknowledge the cruelty there might be in a wish to detain her with her, than her part was taken; but it was with a pang, far exceeding his, who in his haste to escape from immediate danger, destroys with his own hand that property, on which alone all his future hopes of happiness depend, that Ellen resolved to part with her daughter. Never had she felt a misery so insupportable, and which seemed so entirely to drive Reason from her seat, as the thought that she beheld, for the last time, this object so beloved, inflicted. To be restored to society and reputation now became a hundred fold more important to her than ever, and the despair of ever being able to accomplish a purpose, now so momentous, drove her to the point of distraction—suddenly a gleam of hope burst through this gloom.

“ My infant shall be the bearer of a letter to her father,” said Ellen; “ if I can but once induce him to hear me, I must be justified.” At this thought the turbulence of her passions subsided; she became calm. “ Who can tell,”

cried

cried she, fresh hope kindling in her heart, “ but that these are the very means a merciful God, who never forgets his creatures’ sufferings, has appointed for my deliverance ? ”

Ellen soon afterwards appeared before Mrs. Ulric, who easily comprehended by the settled, calm, and deep sorrow that had taken place of a violence so unusual, that Ellen was disposed to submit to the commands of Sir William : Ellen, however, by never quitting her child for a moment, and by evidently keeping over it a jealous and suspicious watch, shewed that she meant not to part with it immediately. Mrs. Ulric was willing to wait at least till the next day before she took any forcible means to deprive her of it ; and so far their intentions agreed, that Ellen had no design of retaining it longer with her than till the next morning. This night, this last night that she might ever embrace it, when the hour of its repose came, she placed it, not as usual, in its crib ; but holding it on her knees, there lulled it to sleep. In this posture, with her heart filled with despair, and her eyes

over-

overflowing with the bitterest tears that ever woman shed, she wrote the following letter to Sir William :—

“ To the voice of reason and of humanity may my heart never be deaf, though in obeying their dictates, that heart should cleave in twain !

“ I deliver my daughter to you, because she is your's also, and because I wish not for any alleviation to my sorrows that must arise from my associating her in my misfortune: But whatever may be her destiny, as to happiness, or misery, she *cannot* be the victim of my crimes, for *I am guiltless*—the angels of Heaven are not more free from the crime of which you accuse me, than I am.

“ You have said, you listen not to the voice of penitence: It is not the voice of penitence, it is the cry of innocence that assails you—an innocence as spotless in all that relates to you, as that of the babe who now looks upon you, and bids you do justice to her injured mother.

“ I am unable to understand the circumstances upon which you have condemned me ; I can therefore make no defence except you will explain yourself farther : Be just alike to yourself and me—see me—hear me—I ask not this as a favor from your pity, or your love—I demand it as a right, I demand it in compassion to you, as well as myself. My ruin involves your condemnation : I would preserve you from too late a repentance : Refuse not to listen to this solicitation ; considering the precautions you have taken, it is the last that can ever reach you. It is the solicitation, (I must speak out, for who have I to speak for me ?) of suffering virtue, of oppressed innocence, of wounded justice ! Oh ! Sir William, when I offer so cruel a sacrifice to the rights you assert over me, deny me not that which the most abject criminal may exact.”

Ellen continued to hold her infant on her knees, and to gaze on its face through the whole of this distressful night, without the power of closing her eyes, or losing in forgetfulness the sense of her wretchedness for one

one single moment. When the morning dawned, the infant awoke ; Ellen put it to her breast. " Dearest of human creatures!" said she, pressing it closely to her, " and do I give thee sustenance for the last time ? Oh ! my God, enable me to support a deprivation so cruel ! "

Ellen then proceeded to dress her child, and sewing up the letter she designed for Sir William in a piece of cloth, she fastened it under the upper vest of the infant. To have endeavoured to have conveyed it by any other means she was assured would have been fruitless ; but she persuaded herself that nothing could be more certain than that whoever found a paper directed to Sir William in the clothes of his child, would carefully deliver it to him ; and she thought it very improbable that the person appointed to convey the child, and who would not have seen her, should have received any prohibition as to forwarding any letter from her ; and even if such a prohibition had been given, it would hardly appear a disregard of it to deliver a paper

paper found upon the person of the child, the writer of which could at most only be guessed at. These considerations tranquillized her as to the delivery of the letter ; but the reception it would meet with, and the effect it would produce, were matters of much more doubtful event.

Conscious of her own innocence, Ellen's first thoughts had led her to believe that it was only necessary to be heard to make this innocence evident ; and from the same purity of mind she had felt a perfect confidence that Sir William's conduct originated rather from mistaken ideas of the punishment due to the crime he supposed her to be guilty of, than from any unjustifiable resentment for that want of love on her part, of which he was accustomed to complain, but which he must be convinced arose wholly from his own unkindness towards her.

More reflection had introduced ideas into her mind much less favorable to Sir William. She could not imagine any circumstances from which such a mistake, as that on which

she

she had supposed Sir William to act, could have arisen: The appeal which he made to the evidence of his own senses strengthened the suspicion of unfair dealing on his part; and it had received additional force by the unnecessary cruelty which there appeared in his so carefully shutting from her all means of making any application to him; and in the unfeeling harshness discoverable in more parts than one of his last letter.

Added to these considerations, were others that seemed scarcely less to militate against the hopes of her deliverance; she knew well the structure of Sir William's mind—she knew how little she had to hope from his generosity or candour—she knew the pertinacity with which he adhered to all his opinions, the reluctance that he felt to acknowledge himself mistaken in the merest trifles; and she could hardly flatter herself that if he were convinced that he had fallen into an error, that he would act from such a conviction, when by so doing he must so painfully establish her superiority, and place himself for the rest

rest of their lives in the light of the offending party. As she was aware how impossible it would be to persuade him that she really and in fact was capable of forgiving, and banishing from her mind a sense of the injuries he had done her, and as she knew he would feel assured that he must never hope to possess her love, she but too reasonably concluded, that, if even any love for her remained, it would not be sufficiently powerful to induce him to restore her to society under circumstances so disgracefully humiliating, and so little happy to himself.

These reflections would probably have had influence enough to have prevented any attempt on her part towards moving Sir William in her favour, and might have put her upon turning her thoughts to some more certain, though more distant, means of deliverance, if the insupportable agony that she felt on the threatened loss of her child had not made her consider all delay, in the hopes of rejoining it, a lengthened torture of so acute a

kind, that she doubted her own ability to endure it with tolerable patience.

This feeling, and the reflection that if she now omitted any one possible means of declaring her innocence, it might hereafter be urged as a remissness arising from conscious guilt, had determined her to try the fate of a letter to Sir William : But although in her present circumstances, this was *all* she could do, so little did it appear likely to answer the purpose, that it was wholly inefficacious in abating that misery which the idea of separation from her child had impressed upon her mind ; and when the letter was written and deposited under the infant's clothes, a melancholy sense of its probable inutility filled her breast, and gave to the approaching deprivation all the horrors due to a farewell, which, as to this world, was to be final.

Ellen, notwithstanding the oppression of her feelings, wished to conquer herself so far as to do that which she had resolved to do, with dignity and composure.

The

The opening and shutting of the doors in the gallery now told her that she might expect the approach of Mrs. Ulric every moment ; her eyes were alternately fixed on the face of her child, and now turned with a look of apprehension to the door ; she pressed her lips to those of the poor baby with a fervency that at any other time she would not have dared to have indulged from the fear of hurting it : Every kiss imprinted she thought was to be the last, and as she intently gazed upon its features, she kissed each separately, with a sensation of despair which ought only to belong to the guilty. Happy was it for the intellects of Ellen that this scene was not much farther prolonged.

Mrs. Ulric came towards her, and Ellen, rising hastily with an effort that required all her fortitude, put the child into her arms, and rushed from her into the next room. Mrs. Ulric, struck with her courage, and moved by the tenderest compassion, committed the infant to the care of those who already waited to receive it, and then hastened back with

all the dispatch in her power, to administer to Ellen all the consolation that her humanity could afford : but Ellen remained long insensible to her kindness and her cares. Mrs. Ulric found her on her return in the highest state of hysterical affection : the disorder baffled all remedies Mrs. Ulric's skill in medicine could suggest, and continued so long unsubdued, as to raise in her mind very serious apprehensions.

At length nature seemed quite exhausted, and Ellen fell into a heavy sleep, which continued for some hours ; when she awoke, she was less agitated, but so ~~extremely~~ reduced in strength, as to be unable to quit her bed, or scarcely to raise her head from her pillow.

She continued for some time subject to returns of the hysterical disorder, and when she appeared to be recovering from these attacks, she was seized with a depression of spirits, that incapacitated her from all exertion, and seemed to deprive her even of the power of thinking.

Mrs.

Mrs. Ulric conceived nothing more likely to remove this kind of indisposition than the open air, and a variety of objects:—the latter it was not in her power, to any extent, to afford her unhappy patient; but she accompanied her for whole days in the garden, where she often induced her to continue, by spreading a repast under the shade of the trees, or by bringing her the harp, and intimating a desire to hear her play upon it. Ellen was not lost to the pleasure of obliging; and in the present state of her mind, having no desires of her own, she seemed wholly directed by those of her companion. Mrs. Ulric, somewhat to vary the scene, ventured to unlock the garden door, and to walk some little way into the adjacent country: The door opened upon a wildish heath, which was skirted by a thick wood, and in this wood they frequently walked. Insensibly this wise and gentle treatment produced the desired effect; Ellen began to awake, as it were, from the lethargy into which she had fallen, her powers of reasoning

returned, and if she felt more, she acknowledged that a state of so alarming an insensibility was well exchanged for one of suffering. The first reflection she made was on the length of time that had elapsed since the departure of her child, and when she found that six weeks were gone, never more to return, she gave up all hopes of receiving her deliverance from the justice or generosity of Sir William.

How he might have been affected if the letter had reached his hands, it is not possible to say, but the trial was never made; and Ellen owed the loss of this feeble chance in her favor neither to design nor treachery, but merely to accident.

The circumstance of any paper being concealed in the piece of cloth which Ellen had fastened round the body of the child, had escaped the notice of its attendant; she had taken it merely for a part of its garments, and with the rest of them having been sent to the washerwoman, Ellen's letter, in fragments,

ments, and defaced, floated soon upon the water.

As Ellen had never attached much hope to this attempt to move Sir William in her favor, she viewed the total disappointment of it without any of those acute feelings that might probably have precipitated her again into the melancholy state of mind from which she had only begun to emerge; and it might indeed be owing to her feelings being blunted as it were, by what she had undergone, that she bore, what she considered as an undeniable proof of Sir William's premeditated injustice, so calmly.

CHAP. VIII.

“ But there is yet a liberty unsung
“ By poets, and by senators unprais’d,
“ Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the pow’rs
“ Of earth and hell confederate, take away :
“ ‘Tis liberty of heart.”

COWPER.

EVERY day Ellen began to recover her faculties, and she used every means in her power to rouse herself to exertion, and to train her mind to fortitude. “ Patience and resignation,” thought she, “ are all the virtues that I am permitted to practise. In the first moments of my overwhelming affliction I

was

was saved, by insensibility, from the necessity of an exertion that it might have been impossible to have made ;—for what I then failed in, I am not responsible ; I am now called to make use of the reason that is restored to me, and let me attend to the call : That life is a blank which is unmarked with the efforts of virtue, but it is a blank that I shall be called to account for in another.”

In consequence of these reflections Ellen, began, for the first time, to turn her attention to her books. She found the collection well chosen, and evidently with attention to her peculiar taste ; this circumstance softened her heart toward Sir William : Some few that she wished to have, were wanting ; she wrote down the names, and delivering the list to Mrs. Ulric, saw her sign the paper ; she readily understood that this was the proof agreed upon, by which its authenticity was to be ascertained. She observed, however, that Mrs. Ulric carefully inspected the articles, and Ellen supposed she was instructed, notwithstanding her ignorance of the French

language, how to distinguish between what was allowed, and what was forbidden: Books however had been expressly named by Sir William, as what would be considered as a lawful requisition, and Ellen was therefore not surprised to find herself speedily supplied with what she wanted. As this however was the first experiment of the kind that she had made, she felt a sensible pleasure in its success; there was something in it that connected her again with the world, from which, before, she seemed so totally excluded; and when she found, with a certainty, that by the stroke of her pen she could procure any gratification, or necessary that she wanted, she no longer felt herself abandoned to the degree that she had done before.

The evenings now grew long, and the days cold; she lived more in the house, and consequently wanted a greater variety of employments there; she had no call for works either of ornament or use; with respect to her clothes, she was supplied with a greater profusion than she had any necessity for: they were all,

it is true, of the plainest kind, and such as, (though they were perfectly comfortable to her) could not be converted into bribes to those about her. To work without any end, would defeat her purpose ; for how could she be interested in the progress of an employment, which in the end must be useless ? And she found books and music were not sufficient to carry her through wet and gloomy days, succeeded by long and tempestuous evenings, without the aid of conversation or exercise.

In this destitution of employment her mind preyed too much upon itself ; and when her imagination represented to her the distress of her family and friends for her loss, or when she thought of her own captivity, cut off in her early youth from every social affection, and from every active duty—but, above all, when she reflected upon her separation from her child, she found the task of resignation almost beyond her power.

Anxiously she cast her eyes around for some means of filling her time, and employ-

ing her thoughts : Happily it occurred to her that part of her Northumberland education had been the art of spinning ; no sooner did she recollect this, than she set about procuring a wheel, and every necessary to her employment. She knew the perfection that the Bohemian linens were brought to, and therefore concluded she should find all the assistance to her manufacture that she could desire. She found her orders for a wheel as speedily complied with as had been the one she gave for books, and she began her new occupation without delay.

Mrs. Ulric seemed highly pleased when she saw her thus employed, and busied herself in removing any trifling difficulties that arose. This new interest produced a fresh tie between them ; Mrs. Ulric frequently brought her work, and passed the whole evening with Ellen : It is true, they could not converse, but they had by this time established a kind of language between themselves, that served extremely well for all common purposes ; and Ellen had even attained the knowledge

knowledge of the meaning and the pronunciation of several German words.

This knowledge, however, she acquired against the inclination of Mrs. Ulric ; for Ellen easily perceived that she seemed to be sorry when any word had escaped her, and the pertinacity with which she always declined repeating any word that Ellen endeavoured to pronounce after her, and her apparent wilful misconception whenever Ellen took any means of inducing her to teach her in German the names of those objects with which they were surrounded, made it clear to Ellen that she lay under the strictest possible prohibition as to teaching her the language ; and she saw that she adhered to her orders with an integrity that all her attachment to Ellen, and the pleasure that it must be supposed she would naturally have taken in conversing with her, could not shake.

Ellen revered Mrs. Ulric the more for this steady adherence to what, she had no doubt, was with her a point of duty ; and she easily forgave the effect in consideration of the cause, though

though the dreary melancholy of her life was so beyond measure increased by this very circumstance. Had it not been for those scruples in Mrs. Ulric, nothing could have been more easy than for Ellen to have learnt German ; and as she never lost sight of the hope of acquiring the language, as one most essential means to bring about her deliverance, she treasured up in her memory all that she had learnt from Mrs. Ulric, and in spite of her precaution, she added almost daily something to her store.

The winter passed away, the spinning plan had succeeded fully, and Ellen now began to interest herself about the cloth that was to be sent to the weaver, and that which was to be returned from him. She could not sometimes help smiling at the artificial business she had contrived for herself, and at the perfect earnestness in which she saw Mrs. Ulric about the matter ; but she carefully avoided destroying the illusion, and went on spinning as if her web were to be as long as

Penelope's

Penelope's might have been but for "the backward labours of her hand."

Ellen's health was now thoroughly re-established, and she endeavoured to add a degree of cheerfulness to the patience and resignation which she had hitherto practised. By frequently repeating to herself all the German she could pick up from her companion, her thoughts were more than ever fixed upon the language, and with so few circumstances to divert them from any object, which even from a slight motive might have engaged them, it is not wonderful if they were almost incessantly bent upon one, from which so important an advantage might be gained:—to attain the German language became now the first wish of Ellen's mind, and she was resolved to take some vigorous step towards it.

She had hitherto forbore to send for the books necessary to her instruction, as far as it was possible she could instruct herself, from an apprehension that this was a request upon which Mrs. Ulric would infallibly put a nega-

a negative ; but observing that Mrs. Ulric now seldom cast her eye over the articles contained in the lists she signed, she resolved to hazard the attempt.

Amongst several other things which she sent for, only with the design of making the list larger, that so any particular article might more probably pass unnoticed, she put down all the German books she thought necessary to her purpose. She delivered this list to Mrs. Ulric the next time she visited her apartment ; it was with no small degree of solicitude she attended its fate, but she had the satisfaction to see it signed without hesitation or inspection, and instantly sealed and directed, by which dispatch she concluded that some immediate means occurred of sending it to Dresden, and she was confirmed in this conjecture by the speed with which she received the packet in return.— And now, for the first time, she had a secret from Mrs. Ulric ; she carefully locked up her German treasure, and took care to secure the door of her room whenever she recurred

to the study of that language. It was with the greatest assiduity that she pursued her task, but without some oral assistance she soon saw cause to fear that she should make no progress that could be useful to the great purpose, for which alone at this time she had thought of acquiring the knowledge of the German tongue. She found, however, an incidental advantage in her new study—this was employment, and German for a time superseded spinning.

In these several occupations, diversified with music and chess, in which she had discovered Mrs. Ulric to be somewhat of a proficient, with a regular course of reading, and in the regulation of her own mind, supported with a vague hope that at some distant period her deliverance might make a part of the designs of Providence, Ellen passed her time; and such was the tranquillity that the innocence of her heart, and the equanimity of her temper secured to her, under the deprivation of nearly all that is supposed to make life desirable, that not only she enjoyed a degree

a degree of happiness unknown to the most prosperous guilt, but such as is unattainable even in the over eager pursuit of the most legitimate objects. Her mind was calm and vigorous, her body healthy and active, the roses, which even the chagrins of the first months of her marriage had banished, returned to her cheeks, her eyes recovered their vivacity, her well-formed limbs acquired all their natural agility, and perhaps Ellen had never in the whole course of her life appeared an object so proper to excite love and admiration as she did at this present period ;—and must it be, that such a rose is doomed for ever

“ To waste its sweetness on the desert air ? ”

CHAP.

CHAP IX.

“ Sweet is the breath of vernal shower,
“ The bee’s collected treasure sweet,
“ Sweet music’s melting fall ; but sweeter yet
“ The still small voice of gratitude.”

GRAY.

TWO years were now passed, and a third far advanced, since Ellen entered the walls of this dreary habitation. No change seemed to await her ; and amidst the never-ceasing vicissitude of human affairs her fate alone seemed fixed, as if the grave indeed had inclosed her. But he, who could break the bonds of death, was not impotent to open the doors of her prison.

About

About this period Mrs. Ulric fell ill, and her illness proved a rheumatic fever. Ellen attended her with all the assiduity that affection and gratitude could inspire ; she furnished her chamber with every possible accommodation from her own, she frequently passed the night by her bed-side, and thought nothing painful to herself that could contribute to alleviate the pains of Mrs. Ulric.

It was in her frequent visits to the chamber of the invalid, that Ellen first observed that the under servant had been changed, and that her successor was a German. To this person, as Mrs. Ulric was entirely incapable of attending upon Ellen herself, devolved all the duties of waiting upon her at her meals, or administering to her any little services that she might want. Ellen observed that she performed all this with something more than a common zeal to oblige, that she appeared pleased to be employed, and often lingered in her apartments without any apparent reason. Ellen imputed all this to the natural good-humour of the girl, who
might

might probably be moved by the state of captivity which she could not but know she was in. It occurred to her that she might turn this compassion to somewhat better advantage than merely having her dinner warmer, or more nicely served, by learning from her new attendant the better pronunciation of some German words. She made the experiment, and found it fully answered by the alacrity with which the girl seemed willing to enter into conversation. She observed that she spoke what appeared to her to be purer German than that spoken by Mrs. Ulric, and from hence she concluded her to be a Saxon. This idea led her to imagine it highly probable that she could read, and if it should prove so, behold her at length furnished with a preceptress in the German tongue.

She made the trial on the instant, and was soon convinced that her conjecture was well founded; the girl read with fluency and pleasure, seeming desirous to recommend herself to Ellen to the best of her power.—

The

The book which she had put into her hands, was a book of such familiar phrases as are calculated for the use of learners ; and when Ellen was satisfied with the experiment that she had made, she sought a sentence expressive of her thanks, and she read it with as good pronunciation as she was mistress of.— The girl seemed forcibly struck, and turning over the leaves, stopped not until she found an expression, the sense of which was, “ I owe all to you.” This she pronounced with so peculiar an emphasis, pointing at the French on the other side to Ellen, and looking upon her with so much meaning, and with a countenance so suited to the sense of the words she used, that Ellen felt an instant conviction that she was known.

When words are wanting, the most untutored will have recourse to actions. The girl, as if impatient to explain herself, threw herself on her knees before Ellen, and passionately kissing her hand, pronounced the name of the Saxon village in which Ellen had passed so many weeks. This word instantly

stantly recalled to her recollection the features of the person before her, and she recognized the daughter of the cottager, to whom her bounty had furnished so seasonable a relief when her habitation had been destroyed by fire.

Ellen's bosom had long been a stranger to the degree of delight that this discovery communicated ; her quick perception anticipated in a moment all the advantages she might derive from it, and her first sentiment being that of gratitude to an ever watchful Providence, she threw herself on her knees by the girl, and with uplifted hands and eyes thanked Heaven for what she felt as an earnest of her deliverance.

From this moment scarcely an hour passed without Ellen making some advance in her powers of communicating her sentiments to her new friend ; and as she had from the first warned her to conceal their intercourse from Mrs. Ulric, their hours of lecture were conducted with the greatest secrecy. Ellen thought it unnecessary to explain any circumstances

cumstances of her situation farther to the girl, than to inform her that she was an English woman, and to assure her most solemnly that she was unjustly detained from her country and friends, and that all she desired was the means of releasing herself from her present confinement. She however fully exposed her poverty, and her utter inability to reward any risk the young woman might run in assisting her to escape.— To all such precautionary information, the girl constantly replied in the grateful and affecting words that she had first used, “ I owe all to you !”

It was only by degrees that they came to understand each other with tolerable ease; but Ellen learnt, through all the imperfection attending the very first of their communication, that her grateful Saxon was ready to sacrifice every thing for her sake. When she was able more fully to understand her, she learnt that she had only been taken by Mrs. Ulric on a disappointment she had

of a servant, whom she had more approved; and that as her subsistence depended upon her labour, she did not doubt, as her character was good, of being able to find, without difficulty, as eligible an establishment as her present one, should she lose it in consequence of her services to Ellen.

Ellen, from her natural abhorrence to all disguise, hesitated whether she should not, now she could explain herself with tolerable facility, take Mrs. Ulric into her confidence; but, upon farther reflection, she found that her present hopes were too dear to be put to hazard by a communication, which from the proofs she had seen of Mrs. Ulric's high sense of the sacredness of the trust reposed in her, might be the means of destroying them all together. She considered that in effecting her escape, she did justice to herself without injuring any body; and she felt assured, from the idea she had formed of Mrs. Ulric's character, that were she acquainted with the whole of the case, she would rejoice in her deliverance.

These considerations determined her to maintain her secret. She learnt from Theresa the name of Mrs. Ulric, and that of the Nobleman in whose house she was confined ; and no longer wondered, from what she knew of his intimacy with Sir William, that he had been able, with his assistance, so completely to succeed in his plan of shutting her up.

Some weeks were now elapsed since Mrs. Ulric had been confined to her bed, and though the force of the disorder was abated, she was become so lame, that she could not be moved from thence ;—however, as some amendment appeared every day, the time pressed ; for Ellen's best hopes of a successful escape were placed on her being able to conceal it for some days from Mrs. Ulric.

Theresa and she now daily consulted upon the best means of effecting this escape. The absolute want of money was a great obstacle ; for Ellen was desirous to purchase a peasant's dress of the country, as she hoped, by such a disguise, to pass wholly undistinguished from those with whom she was to mix.—

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Money was not to be procured, but Ellen suggested the possibility of exchanging some of her own clothes for those of the kind she now preferred. This was accordingly accomplished, and Ellen found herself in possession of all the necessary garments. Theresa had informed her, that until she could get beyond the limits of Bohemia, even the little German she knew would scarcely be of any use to her ; that the Bohemians hated the Germans, and could never be induced to apply themselves to the study of their language, though there were schools established for that purpose in several places ; that therefore she would find few people in the interior parts of the country who understood it, and though most of the farmers who were situated on the great roads, had a very competent knowledge of German, there were few who would be induced to converse in it. Theresa therefore advised that, laying aside all attempts at making herself understood, she should trust wholly to the compassion her speechless wants might excite,

and the reward that her music should be thought to deserve.

The idea of the latter resource had also been suggested by Theresa, whose two years' residence in a Bohemian service had made very well acquainted with the predilection that the lower rank of people in Bohemia bore to music ; she had observed Ellen's harp, and had told her, that could she carry that with her, a few tunes upon it would scarcely ever fail to procure her a draught of milk, or a night's lodging. The harp was too cumbersome for Ellen to think for a moment of burthening herself with it ; she had therefore determined to substitute a mandoline, which she had sent for to Dresden, and Theresa fully approved the succedaneum.

Ellen could not help shrinking from the idea of performing such a journey as lay before her alone ; she would willingly have engaged Theresa to have accompanied her ; she found her perfectly ready to retrace, in her company, the steps that had led her from her native village ; but, besides that

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Ellen, from her ignorance whether Sir William had returned to England, or had continued abroad, was very unwilling to approach Saxony, it being the place where, in the latter case, she was most likely to meet with him, or with somebody who, from their connexions with him, might know her—she could not consent to bring Theresa into a situation where she would again be a burthen upon her friends, when she had nothing in her power to make them any compensation for such a burthen.

There were similar objections to making her the companion of her travels in any other direction; for let her part with her where she would, short of England, she had nothing wherewith to reward her, or to assist her in finding her way home. Ellen's secret wish was, that Theresa would accompany her to England—there she doubted not of being able to make her such a recompence as would fully repay her for all her trouble and fatigue; but to so distant a peregrination Ellen observed a reluctance in Theresa, that she was

too delicate to try to overcome ; and, indeed, a still farther reflection upon all circumstances, soon reconciled her self-denial with prudence. She considered that if Theresa accompanied her, her escape would be immediately discovered, and as she had no means of speedy flight, and no place of refuge, such a discovery would inevitably lead to a renewal of her captivity. She recollect^{ed} what Sir William had said in his first letter, of the precautions he had taken to render abortive all attempts to escape, and she became convinced that her safety lay in leaving Theresa behind her, since by her continuing her attendance in her apartment some days after her departure, she would not be obliged to announce her flight until she was securely beyond the reach of all pursuit.

The place from whence she thought it most easy to escape, was the garden-door ;—since Mrs. Ulric had indulged her with extending her walks beyond the garden, all fastenings had been removed from it except the lock ; she shewed the door to Theresa,

who

who assured her that she could easily find a method of opening that.

Every thing was now arranged. It was agreed that Ellen should appear indisposed when she made her last visit to Mrs. Ulric, before her departure, and that the supposed continuance of this indisposition should be the excuse that Theresa should make to Mrs. Ulric for Ellen's unusual absence from the sick chamber. To give this apology the greater air of truth, Ellen had no sooner determined upon her flight, than she forbore, under one pretence or other, her daily visits to Mrs. Ulric, and she even sometimes suffered two days to pass without seeing her. This was a severe infliction to Ellen's grateful and feeling heart, more especially as she could not but observe Mrs. Ulric seemed cast down by this relaxation in her attentions; but the necessity of the case silenced her scruples, and she consoled herself with the thought that in future she could so explain her conduct to her friend, as would fully exculpate her from any charge of unkindness.

Ellen took from Theresa a direction to Mrs. Ulric, to whom she determined to write from England an acknowledgment of all the obligations she had received from her, and to send her some token of her esteem and gratitude ; she also put down the name of her faithful Theresa, and that of the place where she might transmit the reward for her services that she meant to send her.

She next studied all the maps of Germany and Bohemia that she had in her possession, and having learnt from Theresa the exact spot in which she then was, she sketched out a kind of route for herself, as something of a guide to steer her course by ;—here Theresa could be of little use to her, as her knowledge of the country, except by hearsay, was confined to within a few miles of the place they were in.

Ellen having made all the preparations for her expedition, and taken all the precautions that circumstances would admit of, appointed the next morning for her departure. Theresa packed a small basket with cold meat and bread,

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bread, at the bottom of which Ellen put several trifles that she thought might possibly be of comfort or assistance to her ; she made up also as large a bundle of linen as she could carry with any convenience, both as a source of comfort to herself, and as a means, if all others failed, of procuring food or lodging ; she farther provided a pair of shoes besides those she wore, and being dressed in her peasant's dress, her mandoline slung by her side, her bundle under one arm, and her basket on the other, she quietly descended the stairs which led from the gallery to the hall, and, accompanied by Theresa, made the best of her way to the garden. Theresa easily burst the lock of the door, and Ellen saw herself at liberty ; she turned to embrace her faithful Theresa, saying, "Oh my friend ! how shall I ever repay you ? Take all I have to give, as an earnest that when I have more, I will give more."

This *all* was a thin plate of gold in which the picture of her father was set, and which she had loosened from the picture for this

purpose. It had occurred to her to make this use of it during the course of the preceding night, as she lay sleepless and disturbed with the thoughts that she should be obliged to quit Therefa without leaving with her any mark of her esteem, or any earnest of what she intended to do for her in future.

Therefa generously declined accepting the gold, urging that it might be of use to her; but Ellen felt there was so little difference between actual want, and the safeguard that such a piece of gold could be to her, that no consideration of this sort could induce her to forego the pleasure she had in leaving some memorial of her gratitude in the hands of Therefa; yet she afterwards experienced that gold even of less value, was to her of the utmost importance: but though Ellen could conceive the pressure of want, she had not yet felt its weight—she therefore forced all the property she was worth upon Therefa, and again embracing—

“ God protect and reward you, my dear Therefa,” said she, “ and be assured nothing but

but death shall hinder me from shewing the sense I have of my obligations to you!"

"Oh Madam!" returned the grateful hearted Theresa, "God protect and reward you; *I owe all to you!*"

And with these memorable words, accompanied by a flood of tears, she kissed the hand of Ellen, and after watching her move some yards from the garden-door, she withdrew, and closed it upon her.

CHAP. X.

“ Per mezzo i boschi, e per strano Sentiero,
“ Dunque Ella se nándò sola, e romita.”

ARIOSTO.

IT was about five o'clock on a glorious morning, in the middle of July, that Ellen thus effected her escape from a captivity that had lasted more than three years, and of which the miseries had been heightened by a stroke of misfortune, that would have shed a gloom over the brightest days of prosperity. Amid the variety of emotions that swelled Ellen's heart at this affecting moment, fear was a very predominant feeling.

Habit

Habit so far triumphed over reason, as to excite a most lively alarm when she thus found herself wholly dependant on her own powers: unaided and unprotected, she shrank from the project she had undertaken — she thought for a moment it was above the strength either of body or mind assigned to her sex, and that it was presumption to have undertaken it. This was but the thought of a moment; the next she smiled at the force of prejudice, and the artificial imbecility, and false idea of decorum, induced by custom. She considered, that in the eyes of all who met her, she was only a peasant, and could therefore draw on herself neither the gaze of curiosity, or provoke the observations of impertinence; for that a *peasant* should make use of her limbs in moving from place to place, unattended and alone, was according to rule, and the *eternal fitness of things*. To those who knew not that her journey extended farther than from her native village to the neighbouring one, there was nothing daring or unfeminine in being alone; and

and that in fact the whole of her journey was only to consist of a certain number of such removals from village to village.

Thus the objections of prejudice were presently silenced by reason; but there were yet certain difficulties and contingent dangers that were but too real, and to support herself under both, all her natural force of mind, and undoubting reliance upon the superintendence of Providence, were no more than absolutely necessary.

She had before her a journey of more than nine hundred miles, without money, without a friend to whom she could make herself known, without the means of warding off one evil that might attack her; should her strength fail, or should illness seize her, she had not the possibility of supporting herself until vigour returned, or until health was restored. She was to depend upon charity for the morsel necessary to her daily sustenance, and for her nightly lodging; and from her ignorance of the route she was to take, and the impossibility she must find in calculating her powers

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of reaching such places as would afford shelter, it was but too probable she would frequently find herself hungry when no food was near, and weary when she knew not where to lay her head ;—if the public roads exposed her more to danger, the private paths rendered her more helpless if danger approached, and to the most eligible choice in such an alternative no wisdom was adequate. These, and many such thoughts as these, alarmed, but did not depress, the mind of Ellen.

With all these difficulties and dangers before her, she still thought herself happy that she was no longer a prisoner ; and if she had been able to preserve her equanimity in a more calamitous state, should it desert her in a less ? She endeavoured, by reason, to divest her situation of all imaginary terrors and artificial hardships, and to collect all the powers of her mind to support those that really accompanied it. She resolved then steadily to proceed ; making all possible use of her understanding, her patience, and her courage,

rage, but trusting alone for the happy issue of her endeavours to that Being, who is the defender of the weak, the supporter of the afflicted, and the enlightener of the ignorant.

It was Ellen's design to proceed to Egra, from whence, as nearly as she could calculate, she was something more than eighty miles. From thence she designed her route to be to Frankfort, to Cologne, and through the low countries to Helvoetsluyss ; here she knew she should find a ready passage to Harwich, and as to her further proceedings, she left them to be determined by the circumstances that might arise. At the distance which she then was from England, it appeared to her that at the moment she set foot on its shores she was at home ; and however impossible she might have thought it in former times to have found her way into Northumberland from Harwich alone, on foot and pennylefs, she considered that the person who had found the means under all these disadvantages, with the additional one of imperfect language, to make her way from

the heart of Germany across the English Channel, was not the one who should distress her mind with the difficulties that might arise in comparatively so short a pilgrimage.

The morning was gay and cheering ; Ellen walked leisurely on, and when the heat of the day induced her to seek for rest, she found a shady covert, through which ran a brook, where unpacking her basket, she indulged in the refreshment that the friendly Theresa had provided, and she quenched her thirst with the waters of the rivulet that ran at her feet.

Having continued in this secluded spot till the fervor of the day was past, and till her wearied limbs began to feel the invigorating effect of refreshment, she again began her journey, and with the same leisurely pace, happily arrived, as the sun was setting, at a small village. Her knowledge of the situation of most of the Bohemian villages had induced her, on the sight of a large wood, to quit the public road in search of one, and her sagacity was repaid by finding this,

this, at the moment that she most wished for such an asylum.

Here she was to make the first experiment as to the effect that her music would have upon the charitable feelings of the inhabitants. Placing herself therefore on a little mound of sods, that seemed to be raised for the purpose of a rural feast, she took up her mandoline, and began a little wild and lively air;—presently she found herself surrounded by half a dozen ragged boys and girls; she changed her notes, and set them all dancing. This appearance of gaiety soon drew others to partake of it; the dancers increased, and whenever they suspended their exercise, Ellen sung a few lines of a song, or diversified their amusement by a change in her music.

She had soon the whole village for auditors, and singling from amongst the more elderly part of the company a female, whose countenance she thought promised well, she asked, in English, the favour of a night's lodging. She had not chosen this language

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from the most distant hope of being understood, but merely to shew that she was a stranger, and to draw on a conversation, in the course of which she thought she might be able to fall upon a method of making her wants known. Luckily, however, for her, amongst her auditors there was one of those numerous individuals who travel in large parties from Bohemia all over Europe, loaded with glasses and trinkets of various kinds, and which they sell to so much advantage, that they frequently return with a sum sufficient to support them in affluence the rest of their lives in their native country. This man had, in the course of his travels, visited England, and knew the sounds that Ellen uttered were English, and with a little closer attention was able to make out with perfect clearness the nature of her request; he explained it to the woman to whom Ellen had addressed herself, and it found a ready acquiescence from the charitable heart of the poor Bohemian farmeress, who was moved with Ellen's sweet sounds, and pleased with the softness of her address,

address, and the civility of her manners. So true is it, that however vice may have introduced a variety of tongues, the language of virtue is universal.

Ellen, after thankfully feasting upon a bowl of milk and bread, was conducted to a straw mattress, covered with a rug, which had nothing disgusting or offensive in its appearance, and with which Ellen, after having thrown herself upon the mattress, covered herself. She flattered herself that the fatigues of the day would procure her some hours of sound sleep; but the novelty of her situation, and the fulness of her mind, rendered this hope vain. If she closed her eyes for a moment, the next she started, and awoke in some fancied danger; her slumbers were restless and feverish, and she was happy to rise with the earliest of the friendly household, and after having received a breakfast similar to her supper of the night before, and paid for it by another tune upon her mandoline, she pursued her journey, taking the best directions.

tions as to her route to Egra that she was able to procure.

Three days had Ellen thus wandered alone through the woods of Bohemia, and three nights had she received shelter and sustenance from its hospitable inhabitants. The timidity which reason could not wholly subdue, had yielded to time; she no longer thought that the eye of every passenger was turned upon her; she was convinced she was to no one an object of curiosity or wonder; she no longer expected a ruffian to start from behind every tree, and when she sought a covert wherein to pass the noon-tide hour, she felt secure that she should meet with no interruption. Her mind, always alive to the simple delights of nature, began to take a pleasure and interest in the scenes amidst which she wandered; she often lingered under the cover of a thick wood, more from the delight she felt in the shade, than any need she had of rest; and she often prolonged her sojourn by the side of a rippling brook, that she might continue soothed by its murmurs,

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or from being unable to forego the pleasure of the harmony that resounded from every branch of the trees with which it was overshadowed. Often would she compare her present mode of travelling with that to which she had been formerly accustomed, and her good taste gave the preference to that which she now pursued. Here no impediments from bad roads, no impositions from inn-keepers, no wrangling with postillions, no compassion for the overloaded and worn-out horses, arose to disturb the even tenor of her thoughts, or to spoil her relish of the beauties that surrounded her.

But as the taste of Ellen was genuine, and formed from that love of nature which is the result of good sense and a feeling heart, it was pure from those allays of romance, which, while they give a greater currency to what is called taste, do in fact debase its essential qualities. While, therefore, as a matter of feeling, she preferred wandering on foot amidst woods and villages, with no certain path to direct her to the shelter she was seeking,

seeking, she fully acknowledged the more certain comfort of a well-built travelling chaise, drawn even by miserable post-horses, along a road which presented no objects but the regularly placed milestones, and those posts of intelligence which so benevolently preserve the traveller from going astray.

The weather since Ellen had begun her peregrination had been uncommonly fine, the sky above was serene, the ground beneath dry and firm, but she was well aware what an alteration a change of season would make, not only in her comforts, but in the pleasures of her imagination ; and she felt sometimes, with no little pain, that though wandering in scenes such as she was at present in, when it was voluntary, and the shelter at hand, might be delightful,—yet to the weary traveller who had no option, and no refuge to flee unto whatever mischief might befall, it was attended with danger and inconveniences, from the feelings and fears of which all its pleasures would be most readily relinquished. If therefore she were willing

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and ready to make use of the amusements which offered themselves on the way, as the means to cheer the melancholy path that she was treading, she was not less desirous to arrive at that haven of rest, when such alleviations would be no longer wanted.

It was not however only from the woods, the birds, and the brooks, that Ellen in this forlorn situation derived amusement to her fancy, or food for reflection; while she marked the extreme poverty of that rank of people with whom she now associated, yet saw them tread a soil rich with every blessing that Nature could bestow, and which asked but the hand of labour working for itself to crown them with abundance, how did her heart recoil from the consequences of that feudal tyranny which makes the many subservient to the few!

Yet was her pity often checked, and she was led to think it misplaced, when she beheld the cheerful good humour of the people, the happy air of their countenances, and the little sense they seemed to have of their wants.

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wants. In the hopelessness of their state they seemed to find its consolation ; they were at the worst, and proved how much less painful it is to suffer than to fear. If the blessings of free men were beyond their reach, they were equally secure from those ills, the probability of which alarm those who have any thing to lose.—The unfruitfulness of the seasons, the devastations of fire or of war, all were to fall upon their Lord ; they were but another part of his property, and evils that did not affect their persons were indifferent to them.

“ Happiness then,” said Ellen, “ is the plant of every soil, since it will flourish even in the deserts of slavery. Who then shall deny that the God of *all* is merciful to *all*.”

But Ellen’s present situation called forth reflections more interesting to her than any benevolence, however warm or extended, or however lively may be the interest we take in the pains or consolations of others can produce. She had now subsisted three days on charity, and the alternative for many days to come was starving—a circumstance to her

so new, and in general considered as so degrading, could not but fill the reflecting mind of Ellen with a variety of affecting thoughts. The very people whom the tenderness of her heart led her to pity, considered her as one degree below themselves in the scale of human happiness, and from the very poverty which she regarded with so much compassion, she received a boon, without which she must have perished. But, though thrown from her rank in society, Ellen considered herself not the less as maintaining her station in animated nature; she was still one of those beings who are placed only lower than the angels, and who, in the eye of Providence, are all equal. Whatever distress therefore she felt from the ungratified wants of cold and hunger, it was unimbittered by any sentiment of wounded pride; she considered it not as any debasement to be reduced to a state in which a God, who is considerate alike of all his creatures, has seen good to place so large a part of them; and it was with equal gratitude to that God, and equal elevation

of

of mind, though certainly not with an equal degree of happiness, that she now stretched forth her hand to receive, as she had before extended it to give.

“ Are we not all alike children of God’s mercy, thought she, and shall we conceive that there is greater dignity annexed to receiving it through one medium than another? On some he bestows his alms by the means of parental inheritance, he gives it to others as the price of their personal labours, but they are not the less absolute dependants on his daily bounty than those whom he appoints the ravens to feed. He has ordained my present sustenance to flow from the charity of my fellow creatures, let me serve him in receiving, as they serve him in giving. The greater blessing has been mine, it may be mine again, but in the mean while let me not grudge it to those to whom in the present moment God has granted it.”

How much so just and yet so uncommon a manner of thinking contributed to the internal peace of Ellen, in her present distressful

circumstances, may be known by those who have experienced all the pangs that a contrary way of reasoning can inflict; who in the loss of every thing that constitutes human happiness have breathed their *bitterest* sighs, from the sense of the *shame*, which they falsely imagined to be annexed to a fall from affluence to poverty. But, if there be no shame in being *born* poor, how can there be any, where the change is independant of guilt, in *becoming* so? If there be no shame in poverty, innocently incurred, can their be any in receiving the relief that poverty requires? Can what is the virtue of our fellow creatures be our degradation? Be it remembered, misfortunes may *afflict*, vice only can *degrade*. The one is often the best of God's gifts, the other is the work of ourselves alone.

CHAP. XI.

" Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful."

SHAKESPEARE.

TOWARDS the close of the fourth day of Ellen's wanderings, she began, as usual, to look around her for those appearances in the country which generally indicated where a village was to be found ; she looked but without discovering any thing that gave her reason to suppose that she should find what she sought.

She was just emerged from a thick wood, and had entered upon a kind of heath, which from its extent and dreariness, presented her with an uncomfortable and alarming pro-

pect ; no mark of human habitation, no mark of shelter of any sort, was to be seen—she must either cross the heath before her, in pursuit of the refuge she wanted, and to do this would take up a considerable time, or she must return into the wood which she had just left, and there take up her abode for the night: Her fears forbade the one, and her weariness she thought, almost made the other impossible. Terror, however, was, for the moment, more prevalent than fatigue, and she resolved to attempt to cross the heath: she had still some day-light, and she considered, that should she arrive too late in a village to find admittance into any house, yet that the shelter that some out-building, or shed, might afford her, was preferable on many accounts to any she could hope for in the wood.

Ellen set forward accordingly, but the wild seemed to lengthen as she went, and she became so fatigued that she could hardly proceed; to stop, however, was what she could not resolve upon; the evening was dark and lowering, and, for the season of the year, cold, and

and while she could move her limbs she could not consent to lie down upon the bare and hard ground, without a twig to shelter her, and exposed to all the rain and storm that seemed gathering : With slow steps she went on, and at length reached the other side of the heath ; she found it bounded also by a wood, but not so uninterruptedly thick as that which she had passed through before her entrance on the heath : The evening was already too dark to enable her to distinguish with certainty, but there appeared as if there had been once roads cut through the wood, though they seemed now to be nearly grown up, and the spot where she then was she thought was the entrance of an avenue ; fatigued as she was, this thought gave her power to proceed ; she flattered herself that it might lead at least to some ruined building, where, at the worst, a jutting cornice, or projecting wall, "just nodding to its fall," might afford her some shelter from the rain, which now began at intervals to fall very heavily, accompanied with loud and sudden gusts of wind ;

nor was the conjecture ill founded. After about half an hour's walking, in which time all her outward garments were completely wet through, she found herself amongst the intricacies of some building, which she took for the cloisters of a decayed monastery; she troubled herself, however, but little in ascertaining whether she were right or wrong; there was too little light to have enabled her to have discovered the truth, if it had been important to her to have known it, but the most momentous concern was to find out some place where she could rest her weary limbs unexposed to the weather: As the roof of that part of the building which she was then in was not destroyed, she withdrew to the upper end of it, and there, taking off such of her clothes as were most wet, she seated herself upon a kind of stone bench, and began to rummage her basket for something to eat. Luckily it was tolerably supplied; she had that morning been so much moved by the want of linen in the dress of the good farmeress who had lodged her the night before, that she had not

not been able to forbear, when she parted with her, presenting her with a chemise of her own, though this was contrary to the prudential rule which she had laid down, not to part, in a country where she could so easily discharge her bill with a song, with what, in another, whose greater riches had banished equal hospitality, she might find necessary to her support.

The woman was so much struck with this unexpected piece of generosity in Ellen, that she loaded her with a thick slice of bread, and a small bottle of milk: Ellen having found equal munificence where she had sought a dinner, had preserved her morning store untouched, and she now found it a most seasonable relief. Hungry and fatigued, however, as she was, she prudently consumed only half of her riches, preserving the remainder for the exigencies of the next day; in part, however, she supplied the deficiencies of her scanty meal by swallowing a few drops upon a lump of sugar, she having had the precaution to furnish herself with such a cordial upon leaving the place of her captivity.

Having taken all the refreshment which she thought it prudent to allow herself, she lay down to sleep, and though the floor on which she stretched herself was hard and damp, and her pillow only her bundle of linen, such was the fatigue of her body, and such the calmness of her mind, that in a few moments she fell asleep. She knew not how long she had continued in this situation, when she was suddenly awakened, as if by some noise ; she started up and looked around her, when, to her unspeakable terror, she beheld by the glimmering of a light, not a hundred yards distant, two men carrying a lady, who, by her helplessness appeared to be dead.

Ellen's heart did not at this moment beat with its usual regularity, yet her presence of mind did not desert her, and considering that though the light enabled her to discover the objects that were close to it, it was not sufficient to discover her to them in the distant and dark corner where she lay ; she slunk as quietly as she could behind a pillar that formed the place where she was, into something

of a recess, and waited the event in silence. The men bearing their burthen between them, advanced nearer, and Ellen was something comforted by understanding from the expressions of one of them, who spoke in French, the deepest marks of grief for the situation of the lady. He could not surely, (she thought) be the murderer of one, whom he so much deplored ; yet, on laying her down, scarcely ten yards from the place where Ellen stood, and the light shining full upon her, Ellen observed that her clothes were stained with blood, and she fancied that she saw the blood still issuing from her bosom, which from the disorder of her dress was very visible.

“ What will become of me ? ” exclaimed the man (who was the only one who had yet spoken) “ wretched Antoinette ! dearest creature ! How have you reason to curse the hour in which you saw me ! ”

These words determined Ellen ; she was assured there was no danger, but there was distress, and she might be of use ; coming out

therefore hastily from her hiding-place, she caused little less consternation by her appearance, than she had felt upon being first startled from her sleep: "Suspend your wonder," said she in French, to the person who seemed most interested, and whom she now discovered to be a gentleman, and that the other man appeared a servant, "suspend your wonder, and do not fear that I have any connexions that may injure you; I am alone here, but perhaps I have the means to assist that lady, and I am sure I have the inclination." A ready confidence took place of the suspicions that had for a moment alarmed the breast of the stranger.

"Alas!" cried he, "I can only thank you; but I fear this miserable victim of misguided revenge is past all assistance."

Ellen scarcely waited to hear these words; she now saw that the lady was really wounded, and she seemed to have fainted from loss of blood; but though the trace of the blood still shewed whence it had flowed, it was now staunched. The light enabled Ellen to dis-

cern

cern that the place they were in was, as she had suspected, the ruins of a cloister, and it formed one side of a quadrangle, the buildings of the other three sides of which were nearly destroyed; in the midst of this square had formerly been a fountain, and, though ruined, it still contained water: Ellen ran thither, and filling a small cup which she carried about her, with water, she washed the lady's wound, and had the satisfaction to find it was small, and did not appear to be deep; she then cut a large piece of a kind of sticking plaster, which made a part of her stores, and covered the wound with it, and then mixing a little of the water with some of her cordial drops, she contrived, with the assistance of the stranger, who aided her benevolent efforts with the greatest assiduity, to pour a small quantity down the lady's throat; she then proceeded to chafe her temples, and rub her hands, and in a short time she was encouraged to continue her endeavours with still greater energy by the lady giving evident signs of returning life; in a few moments she opened her eyes;

eyes ; Ellen gave her more cordial, and in a very short time she recovered her senses.

While this was passing, the servant, at Ellen's suggestion, (for the stranger, though he imitated and assisted her in all she did, seemed to have lost the power of suggesting any thing) had been fully employed in collecting a few dry sticks, which was a task of some difficulty, for the rain of the preceding night had left nothing in a fit condition to burn that had been exposed to it ; luckily, however, in his researches he discovered several bundles of dry brush wood, and branches of trees, that had been heaped together in one corner of the cloister, probably by some peasant, who had designed to carry them away at some future opportunity : Of these he soon set fire to a sufficient quantity to afford the comfort both of light and heat ; the lady was removed nearer to it, and farther from the influence of the air, which blew cold on the open side of the building. The lady's clothes were wet, and Ellen had no change to offer her ; however she took off her upper garments, as she had done her own,

own, and spread them all before the fire, while she furnished her with some linen from her bundle, that supplied, though but ill, their place.

While Ellen performed the task of dressing and undressing the lady, the two men had retired, but not before the one, who seemed the master of the other, had assured the lady, in German, that she might trust wholly to Ellen, for that, if ever there were an angel from heaven she was one. The lady herself appeared so weak, and so confounded, either with what she had passed through, or with what she now saw around her, that she could utter nothing more than a few broken expressions of gratitude, in German, and sometimes some passionate exclamations, in a language that Ellen did not at all understand. Ellen had now an opportunity of observing that this unknown lady was possessed of a very uncommon share of beauty, that her form was inexpressibly fine, and that notwithstanding her paleness and languor, her complexion and countenance had charms that Ellen thought she had not seen equalled; her dress, which was a kind

of travelling chemise, spoke her of affluent fortune, all the materials of which it was composed being of the finest texture, and the air of conscious superiority with which she received the services of Ellen, if it did not give her kind benefactor a favorable opinion of her heart, at least assured her, that she was assisting one, who, from the habit of command, entertained the idea that all who approached her were bound to obey.

When Ellen had contributed all in her power to restoring her to some degree of comfort, she produced the remains of her supper, spared so prudently from her own present wants, in reference to those of the next morning: The lady readily eat the bread and swallowed the milk, and appeared so much revived by the refreshment they afforded, and so fully restored to health and vigour, that Ellen soon found she had been mistaken in having attributed the state of insensibility, in which she had at first seen her, to loss of blood; from what now appeared, it seemed more probable that it had only proceeded from fatigue.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

— “Amusement reigns,
“ Man’s great demand ; To trifle is to live :
“ And is it then a trifle too, to die ?”

YOUNG.

IT was upon the return of the gentleman to the fire that Ellen had first leisure to observe him with any closeness of attention ; she had no sooner done so, than she was convinced that she had seen him before, and being persuaded by his manner of speaking both French and German, that he was not a native either of France or Germany, an opinion that was confirmed both by his countenance and complexion, she could not doubt but that he was English ; she made this discovery with a mingled sensation of hope and fear. Again she looked at him, again she listened to the tone of his voice ; she was more and more convinced that he was not

unknown

unknown to her, but it seemed beyond the power of her recollection to recal his name, or where she had seen him. Suddenly, on his throwing himself into a particular position, it rushed upon her mind that he was the husband of her elder sister, that profligate man of fashion and broken fortune, to whom the absurd vanity of her mother had sacrificed the happiness and respectability of character of her favorite child. This discovery, though the strangeness of it threw her into some confusion, relieved her from every fear that she should be known by him. Ellen had never seen him since she was fourteen, when he had visited Groby Manor, for the only time during his connexion with any one belonging to it; she was very sure that the change that had taken place in her person in a period little short of twelve years, must securely shelter her from any discovery from him; for while time had made no other changes in his appearance than what arose from a few wrinkles, or a few grey hairs in the place of the darker locks, and smoother

skin,

skin, which he had possessed in earlier youth; it had with her converted a rosy, sun-burnt, romping, laughing girl, into an elegantly formed woman, whose “pure red and white most truly blended, shewed in her cheek as if the rose and lily strove for mastery.” All gaiety was certainly at this time banished from her countenance, and her large peasant’s straw hat, which she had now again tied closely under her chin, so effectually concealed her features, that if they had been much better known to Mr. Raymond than they really were, she must have been safe from awaking any recollection in him.

As hopeless as she knew his return to England was considered by all his connexions there, and the little probable good that would result if he were to return, yet she could not avoid being shocked at the proof she had before her of the licentious life he continued to lead, nor could she help pitying the lady, little conciliating as her manners were, for having formed a connexion, the extent of the iniquity of which she thought it probable she did

did not know. While these thoughts kept Ellen silent, the lady and gentleman, having dismissed the servant upon some message, continued to talk eagerly, and confident in the fancied ignorance of Ellen in the German language, or careless of her opinion, unreservedly of their affairs and situation. From this conversation she soon understood that the lady was by no means deserving of her pity on the score she had granted it, for that she was herself a fugitive wife, and that having been overtaken in the pursuit made after her by her husband, an affray had ensued, and she had received a wound in attempting to interpose between her husband and her lover, the latter of whom becoming desperate on seeing her blood flow, had fired at the husband, and, as he supposed, had killed him; this act of violence, with the farther acts of outrage he and his attendants were on the point of committing, had so intimidated the companions of the husband, that they had contented themselves with carrying off his body, without making

any

any farther attempt to impede the flight of the lovers. The lady having fainted from pain and terror, and it being no longer safe to continue in any high road, the lover had been obliged to convey her before him on horseback, having dismissed all his attendants excepting one. It appeared from what Ellen heard, that in the course of a journey of more than twelve miles across a country, of which they were ignorant, it had been impossible to afford her rest or refreshment; that she had returned to her senses only to relapse again into insensibility, so that the lover had more than once believed her dead; this was an additional circumstance that had forbidden him to stop at any houle, and he had continued to travel on in hopes of finding some obscure and deserted building, such not being very unfrequent in a country once much more populous than at present, where he might in safety consider upon the course that he had to pursue. Having passed through the outskirts of a tolerably large village, toward the close of the evening,

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he had sent his servant to procure the means of striking a light, in whatever place they might find it eligible, or might be obliged to stop. It was in pursuit of some refreshment that Ellen found the servant was now dispatched, and the lovers seemed to agree, that if they saw no reason against it in the morning, the place they were at present in would suit as well as any other, as a place of refuge for a few days ; they had no doubt but that the pursuit would be renewed with redoubled ardour, and they agreed that their best hope of safety was to remain where they were till their pursuers had overshot their mark.

Hitherto they were so much engrossed by their own concerns, that they seemed to have forgotten that there was such a person in the world as Ellen, but Mr. Raymond now addressed himself to her, hoping, although he did not, from the circumstance of her speaking French, take her to be a native of the country, that he might be able to obtain through her means some local information ;

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he therefore inquired whether her home was near. Ellen replied, that at present she had no home, but was endeavouring to make her way towards a very distant one. “ In France?” “ No.” “ In Germany?” — “ No.” “ In England?” “ Yes.” — “ What the devil!” exclaimed in English, the profligate Mr. Raymond, “ can then have brought you into the midst of a Bohemian wild, alone and destitute?” “ Misfortune!” said Ellen, steadily fixing her eye upon him; “ Misfortunes, but not vice!”

The conscious criminal seemed to shrink into himself, but rallying, “ And how, my pretty one, do you mean to find your way from hence to England, in your present helpless circumstances?” “ By making the best use I can of my understanding and my strength.” “ A brave girl, faith; if I were not just now a little encumbered, I would enlist you under my banner; I am charmed with your spirit.” “ Your pardon, Sir,” said Ellen, with calm disdain, “ I am not so soon enlisted.” “ Oh! you would go with

with me ; my road through life has been the path of pleasure ; I have lived but to amuse myself. But, put aside that overshadowing hat, and let me see whether the face is worthy of the form, and the spirit that enlivens it."

Ellen, without seeming even to hear these words, turned to the lady, and asked, in her imperfect German, whether there were any thing she could do towards her farther accommodation. The lady something sullenly replied, No. And the gentleman said, still speaking in English, " You understand German then ?" " Scarcely," returned Ellen. " Enough, perhaps, to know what we have been talking of, and if so, you may as well know the whole business, I believe you will not turn informer."

Ellen was silent, for she felt little curiosity to know more of an affair that seemed a complicated tissue of profligacy and desperation. Mr. Raymond, however, who thought the circumstances he had to bring forward offered a very reasonable apology for

for an action that, he could not conceal from himself, would be condemned by the general voice of mankind, did not desist from his explanation. "That angel that you see there," said he, looking at the lady, "is the daughter of a beast of an Hungarian Nobleman, who, to fulfil some ambitious schemes of his own, forced her into the arms of an old disagreeable rascal, in high favour with the Emperor. What must a woman of feeling and spirit do in such a case? Surely not submit to all the horrors of the worst kind of slavery, because her tyrant was yclept a husband. I was the happy man whom the lady fixed upon to assist in breaking her chains, and with a liberality of mind, for which I shall ever adore her, she committed herself to my honour, loaded with all the jewels and ready cash that she could collect, and though at present we are put something out of our way, we hope still to find some sacred spot of earth, where the pleasures of love and the fruits of generosity may be reaped, undisturbed by the imagined

rights of husbands, and the abused authority of parents."

Ellen could not but wonder at the ingenuity that had been able to tell a story of disobedience, treachery, adultery, and theft, in terms that, on the first hearing, so little conveyed the nature of the actions they acknowledged. Mr. Raymond was so little conscious that they conveyed it at all, that without any of that embarrassment which a person less hacknied in the *path of pleasure*, (as he had called the road of vice) must have felt in consequence of such a confession, that he went on to say, that having taken what they hoped would have proved effectual methods to mislead the husband into a belief that they had, on leaving Vienna, turned their fugitive course towards Italy, they had indiscreetly neglected to make the best of their way towards Dresden, from the direct road to which place they had deviated, as a means of farther security, and that they had the day before been overtaken, at a moment when they conceived themselves

selves to be in perfect safety. He then proceeded to detail the whole particulars of the affray that had ensued, and to relate that when he found himself in danger of being pursued, not only as a ravisher, but as a murderer, he had sent forward their carriage and their baggage, under the care of a servant in whom he could confide, to Dresden, there to wait his farther orders, and in the meantime to spread a story that the lady was dead, and his master gone he knew not whither. That in the haste in which they were obliged to make their arrangements, they had not been able to secure any part of their property, except the lady's jewels, which were in her pocket, and what little money they had about them. " And now," said this gallant hero of a story composed of crimes, which more than any other in the whole roll of guilt are from their own nature, and the injurious effects that they have upon the interests of society, the just objects of the greatest abhorrence; " and now if fortune will but smile for a few days, we

may still baffle the malice of our enemies. My intention is, to order the servant I have sent to Dresden to join us as soon as possible at Strasburg, from whence we will shape our course to some more secure retreat in the mountains of Switzerland, and there,

“ The world forgetting, by the world forgot,”

we will remain alive only to love and happiness.”—“ Love and happiness !” thought Ellen, “ how widely have I been mistaken both in the means and the end of all that makes life desirable, if these miserables are right !”

It was easy to be perceived that this long discourse of her lover, in a language of which she did not understand a word, was by no means pleasing to the lady ; she broke in upon it by something which she said very peevishly to him, and which Ellen did not perfectly understand. Ellen now began to wish impatiently for the morning, that she might escape from the consequences of a proof so pregnant. How infinitely preferable the most helpless solitude may be, to much

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of the society that is to be met with in the world! yet how often had she heard Mr. Raymond exalted as the most pleasant of his sex! How often had she heard Mrs. Mor-daubt declare that he had not a fault but in the eyes of those rigid mortals who hold pleasure as a vice, who refuse to enjoy the blessings that are given them, and who seek Heaven by abasing the noblest of its works. "Alas!" thought Ellen, "how fatally would he have been awakened from the false peace into which his flatterers have lulled him, had not the rash passion of his unworthy companion interposed between his life and the just indignation of an injured husband!"

Light, at the season of the year when these events happened, is suspended for so short a time, that had it not been for the storms of the preceding evening, which still filled the sky with thick and heavy clouds, Ellen would have been very soon able to have pursued her wishes of quitting her new acquaintance; but the first hours of the morning were dark, and it continued to

rain in some degree. Before these obstacles to her departure were removed, the servant returned with a quantity of milk and bread, which he had purchased at a village a few miles distant. Ellen was invited to partake of this refreshment, which in fact she wanted as much as any of the party; and in the course of the meal Mr. Raymond, who really did possess a part of that kindness of human nature which had gained him the appellation of "the best humoured fellow breathing," expressed much genuine solicitude for the destitute situation Ellen appeared to be in. He felt this the more, as, though he could draw nothing from her to confirm such a suspicion, he was strongly persuaded in his own mind that she had been accustomed to a rank of life, which could not have prepared her to struggle with her present difficulties. Although she had been very sparing of her speech, her accent, her manner of expression, and tone of voice, all assured him of this, and still more, the ease and softness of her manners. He settled

settled in his own mind her probable story to be, that having left her own country as an occasional companion to a person of his own principles, but who possessed less of that compassionate good humour for which he had been often complimented, and upon which he piqued himself, she had, by the change of inclination, and want of generosity in her companion, been reduced to her present difficulties. There was something indeed in the nice sense of propriety which she appeared to have, and which was evident even to one who had lost all such feelings from his own mind, that militated against this idea; but as it was something beyond measure strange, that a person of real fashion and character could be left by any, the most distressing occurrences, in the situation Ellen was now in, he thought it was taking the less improbable side to suppose, that her former way of life had not entirely obliterated all traces of those feelings which once adorned her state of innocence. This supposed situation of

Ellen did not in the least make her a less interesting, or even a less estimable object in the eyes of Mr. Raymond ; and he even felt something of an additional desire to assist her, from the proof such assistance would be to all his acquaintance, that there is sometimes a sentiment of kindness in the breasts of those called wicked, towards the distressed, that the more rigidly virtuous are without. In consequence of these reflections, Mr. Raymond began to press Ellen to attach herself to their party, and hinted, in pretty intelligible terms, that besides all the difficulties and distresses that would probably attend her finding her way back to England, she would find it almost impossible, considering the circumstances in which she would arrive there, to form any eligible establishment ; whereas he had no doubt, if she staid with them, that he should soon be able to introduce her to a friend who would make her forget all that she had lost. Although all this would have been perfectly plain to the apprehension of Ellen, had she been

been the sort of person Mr. Raymond took her to be, yet being entirely ignorant of all that could lead her to his true meaning, and much of what he said applying to her real situation, she at first understood his offers only in a general sense; and when by the turn and strength of the expressions, she began to comprehend that there must be some particular meaning intended to be conveyed, she was absolutely at a loss to guess what that meaning could be. The character of the man who addressed her, and the manner of his expressions, however, persuaded her there was something disgraceful in the protection he offered her; and as she was too wise to think of shewing any resentment, she contented herself with coldly and steadily saying, she was indispensably obliged to endeavour to return to England as soon as possible, and that when there, she was assured she should want neither protection nor friends. The unmoved manner of Ellen, and the little countenance that the lady gave to this plan of Mr. Raymond's, at length

obliged him to cease from farther urging it ; and soon after, the sun breaking forth in all its splendor, Ellen repacking her bundle, and re-adjusting her basket, rose to depart. “ We cannot suffer you to go,” said Mr. Raymond, “ without making a small acknowledgment for the obligations we are under to you ; if you would have gone with us, I would have done much more for you, but now, so low are our finances reduced, that except our jewels, I equally divide the whole of our stock when I offer you this trifle.”—In saying these words, he presented Ellen with a ducat. Ellen’s first impulse was to refuse it, so far did habit make her forgetful of the appearance she then wore ; but Mr. Raymond added, “ No, no,—no refusals ; while you ramble amongst these wilds indeed, the charity of these half savages may make money needless, but when you are among the whole savages of a civilized world, you will have nothing but what you can pay for.”

Ellen

Ellen then took the ducat ; but Mr. Raymond, who felt his solicitude increase for her every moment, in spite of, or perhaps stimulated by, her reserve and coldness, said, “ Devil take me if I’m not ashamed to part so ; stay, would it not be possible to convey you a bill to Cologne ? Do you mean to take Cologne in your way ?”—Ellen replied that she did.—“ The moment we think it safe to quit this retreat,” said he, “ we shall bend our steps towards Strasburg ; we shall be there in much less time than your poor little feet can carry you to Cologne ; come, give me your directions, and at Le Savage you shall be sure of finding, on your arrival in that place, a bill for a sum sufficient to procure you an easy conveyance to England, and to any part of it to which you may chuse to go.”—Ellen hesitated ; the performance of such an offer would annihilate half those difficulties and dangers which she dreaded so much to encounter. “ Such a supply,” returned Ellen, “ would indeed be extremely acceptable to me ; but as, on my return

to England, I shall be perfectly able to return any pecuniary obligations I may receive, I cannot accept your offer, however grateful I may be to you for it, except you will put me into some method of repaying the money when I no longer stand in need of it.” Mr. Raymond regarded her with increased wonder. “ I would give the world to know who you are,” said he, “ and what has brought you into this desert; for I am confident you are no common one.”—“ You shall know who I am,” returned Ellen, “ and all I have undergone, when I return you the money; and then you will acknowledge that the human mind may support any destiny, however hard, which has not been brought on by misconduct.”—“ I believe you are a parson in petticoats,” said Mr. Raymond.—“ No,” returned Ellen, “ I am no parson, but I am a kind of prophetess, and I foretel that you will never know happiness until you return to your wife and children.”—Mr. Raymond retreated a few steps, as if he recoiled from a dread of supernatural power.—“ I

“ I said, when first I saw you, you were an angel, but now I believe you deal with the devil.”—“ You shall know all my dealings at some future hour,” said Ellen; and giving him a paper, added, “ This is my direction, now give me your’s?”—“ And must I wait till a future hour for the explanation of so much mystery?” said Mr. Raymond.—“ You must.”—“ Well then, let it not be very distant.”—He then gave her a direction to himself under the name of Mason, at a particular Hotel in Strasburg; and with reiterated wishes that her journey might prove more prosperous than it promised to do, he at length suffered her to depart.

This adventure did not appear half so singular in the eyes of Mr. Raymond as it did in those of Ellen. The circumstance of finding himself known to her, confirmed his former suspicions, and he had no doubt but that the story she promised him, would only be a detail of the ingratitude and cruelty of some man of his own set, with whom he had associated before he left London. But Ellen was

was struck in no common degree with the singularity of meeting in the woods of Bohemia, a man so nearly allied to her, in circumstances so uncommon and so disgraceful, that she could not avail herself of their connexion to the alleviation of her own distresses, nor could she forbear adverting to the power she had had of administering from her scanty pittance to the wants of two people, who, had it not been for their vices, might have been in possession of every comfort and every accommodation this world can afford.

CHAP. XIII.

—“ I to bear this,
“ That never knew but better, is some burthen.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THIS adventure furnished Ellen with sufficient food for thought as she walked on, and as the day was much cooler than any she had yet experienced, she continued her journey without taking her usual rest at noon. Fortunately she arrived at a decent village early in the evening, and here she resolved to take up her repose for the night, the fatigues of the preceding day and night having made rest absolutely necessary for her. In answer to the enquiries she made here,

here, she had the satisfaction to find that she had not deviated very widely from the direct road to Egra. She had fixed upon this place merely as a point by which to direct her enquiries by, but there was nothing she so much wished to avoid as large towns and cities; and being now pretty well skilled in the best manner of going from one village to another, without straying too far distant from the public road, she contrived in about fourteen days from the time of her escape from captivity, to enter Franconia, without passing through Egra, or having suffered much either from fatigue, hunger, or alarm. Having thus happily accomplished what she computed to be somewhat above the first hundred miles of her journey, she drew a lucky presage for the remaining eight; but accustomed as she now was to being alone, she felt to dread that part of her travels which was to lead her amongst the more thickly inhabited parts of the road, more than any one of the dangers that awaited her in the obscure forests and solitary paths.

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The observation of Mr. Raymond often returned to her mind ; and when she reflected on the different treatment that the beggar wandering through the populous streets of a great city, usually meets with, to that which she had experienced in the Bohemian wilds, she could not help drawing a conclusion that a close neighbourhood was not favourable to the virtue of hospitality.

These reflections made her view her single ducat with a sigh ; but she resolved, as long as the sale of her linen, her mandoline, or the poor ducat in question, could preserve her from the necessity of it, not to ask charity in any town. Ellen continued her method of travelling with tolerable success, though she found a very sensible difference in the appearance and manners of the country ; the latter was more populous, it was better cultivated, but beggars were more numerous, and simple hospitality less.— Although she was readily relieved at a door, she no longer found it so easy to be admitted under the shelter of a friendly roof, and her

music

music was less an equivalent for all the kindness that was shewn her. Ellen, who could not pay for a lodging, and whose soul recoiled from associating with the herds of common beggars that so frequently crossed her way, was therefore necessitated often to content herself with what accidental cover she could find, and which frequently amounted to nothing better than what a wall afforded, where, with her head upon her bundle, she often sought for that sleep she could not find ; and sometimes, overcome with fatigue, even in this exposed and comfortless situation slept soundly.

These frequent sleepings, exposed to the open air, or in situations little sheltered from the weather, made more substantial cloathing necessary ; she durst not part with the only piece of money that she was possessed of, for however she might hope she should receive the supply promised her by Mr. Raymond, at Cologne, she was too prudent to act as if she were certain of it. Her mandoline she now found of little use to her, and

and she was therefore resolved to make that the first sacrifice. Its real value was small, and in her present circumstances she was not likely to get even that value for it; but she thought herself happy in exchanging it for a rug cloak, which made a part of her bundle in the day, and covered her warmly over at night.

Thus she passed through the heart of Germany, keeping on the north of the Mayne, and directing her course towards Frankfort. She found the little German she at first possessed, very serviceable to her, and she daily increased her stock, so that she now found no difficulty in explaining her wants; indeed her difficulties did not lie in explaining, but in relieving them, and they every day became more numerous and distressing. Her first pair of shoes were almost worn out, her cloaths grew thin, and though, from habit, she could now walk more miles in the course of a day than she could when first she set out, so long a continuance of hardships and fatigue began to hav-

have an effect upon her strength, and still more upon her spirits ; the hope which had at first buoyed her up, began to subside ; for as she reflected upon the distance there was still between her and England, she began to think it impossible that her powers of struggling with the difficulties that surrounded her, would continue to her journey's end ; a degree of despondency followed such thoughts, and this increased the very evils she feared. She endeavoured, however, to rouse herself, to awaken hope once more in her heart, and to derive all the comfort from her undiminished reliance on the goodness and wisdom of Providence, that such reliance was calculated to afford. She adverted to the extraordinary circumstances of her having met with Mr. Raymond, and the assistance it was probable she should receive from him ; and she was not unwilling to yield to the degree of superstition that induced her to believe that this might be one mark of the superintendence of Providence, which, whether

whether evident or not, she never for a moment doubted.

Having revived her hopes, and strengthened her courage by such considerations as these, she pursued her way towards Frankfort ; but following her original plan, she entered not that place, but turned aside to a village not far distant, and where she arrived in somewhat less than a month from the time that she had entered Germany. Here she hesitated whether she should proceed to Mentz, and from thence attempt taking a passage on the Rhine ; the ease this would be to her was her strongest inducement, but she doubted whether the sale of all that she was worth would enable her to defray the expences of her voyage, and the question recurring, what she should do when thus, without any resource but the precarious one of charity during the rest of her journey, should she find herself disappointed of the promised supply at Cologne, determined her to trust to her feet some time longer. She directed her course, however, as nearly as she

she could towards the Rhine, thinking it prudent to be within reach of the only mode of conveyance which her circumstances would allow her to avail herself of, however her strength might fail, or her health sink under her fatigue.

The romantic and highly cultivated country that this determination led her through, could not be viewed by Ellen, even in her present state of depression, without the liveliest emotions of delight. The picturesque situation of the villages, the striking forms of the hills, each crowned with a castle, the vineyards, the chestnut groves, all formed a scene such as she had never before witnessed, and which filled her mind with images of beauty perfectly new. She observed, however, the extreme inequality that a wine country produces in its inhabitants, even of the same rank ; and the splendid situation in which she saw some of the peasants, did not in her eyes compensate for the sight of the many poor people with which many of the villages swarmed. This was a country,

how-

however, in which Ellen herself fared very well ; she often gathered chesnuts enough to serve her for a meal, when no other was to be had, and wine she sometimes received gratis, and at others could purchase for a trifle. She found no difficulty in exchanging some of her linen, either for a little money, or for such food as was necessary for her ; it was, however, with the greatest economy that she made use of this resource ; but by the prudent management of that, never forgetting the consideration of the future hour in the wants of the present, and of the other means that were in her power, she was enabled to move on prosperously, though slowly, towards her point. The beauties of the country lessened as she approached Cologne ; and when she set her foot within that dark and ugly city, her heart sunk from a mingled sensation of disgust and fear. The wandering, unknown and unprotected, through the dismal and half-deserted streets of this decaying place, where she was surrounded by falling and empty houses, ap-
peared

peared to her infinitely more dreary and depressing than all the thick forests and extended wilds that she had hitherto passed. She would have instantly quitted a place so uncongenial with her feelings, and sought shelter in some of the numerous farm-houses which surround its walls, and where she might have refreshed herself with milk and vegetables, had she not been eager to ascertain what she had to hope from the promises of Mr. Raymond.

With some difficulty she enquired her way to the hotel, to which he had given her a direction, and soon found, with more grief than surprise, that there was no letter for her. The very precarious circumstances in which she had left Mr. Raymond sufficiently accounted for the breach of his promise to her, and without accusing him of any intentional deceit, or criminal neglect, she withdrew, congratulating herself upon the prudence with which she had husbanded her little store, and which she now found was to be her only dependance.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XIV.

“ There cannot be a pinch in death
“ More sharp than this is.”

SHAKESPEARE.

AS she had entered the Hotel, she had observed two carriages, that seemed, by their appearance, and the people who were employed about them, to belong to some traveller of distinction ; but she had paid little attention to them. On her return, however, one of the servants stood so directly in her way, that she was obliged to stop till he removed ; the moment he saw that he was an hindrance to any one, he made way with a civility that Ellen was conscious was not

paid to her appearance ;—on her thanking him, he turned suddenly round, as if struck by the tone of her voice, when, what were her emotions when she knew him for the personal servant of Mr. Villars ! The man marked not the confusion into which he had thrown her ; for no sooner did his eyes sweep hastily over her dress, than he seemed to have abandoned the thought that had before suddenly occurred, and he returned to his business, which was disposing some parcels within the carriage, with undivided attention.

The effect that such an unexpected encounter had upon Ellen was so great, that for a moment she was unable to stir ; but recollecting herself, she considered that she had no proof that this person was still in the service of Mr. Villars, and that if he were, there was nothing she ought more to avoid than the discovering herself to him. These thoughts made her remove from the place she was in, as speedily as her trembling limbs would allow, but she felt it impossible to quit

quit Cologne without being assured whether or no Mr. Villars was there ; she therefore took shelter in a baker's shop, which was immediately opposite the Hotel, and where she hoped she might be allowed to remain until the carriages moved off, especially as it was plain, from the bustle among the servants, that this would soon take place.

Many and divers were the thoughts that occupied Ellen as she watched from her retreat the motions of the people employed in making the necessary preparations for the departure. If the master of those servants should prove Mr. Villars, the desire of discovering herself to him seemed almost irresistible ; her necessitous situation, the nearness of his relation to her, the perfect innocence which had always accompanied the whole of their intercourse, made her in one moment decide that such substantial advantages as would accrue from her making herself known to him, were not to be sacrificed to punctilio and the fear of misconstruction ; but the reflections of the next instant cor-

reached this too flattering, but unjust conclusion. Whether she were ever again to live with Sir William, or whether she were to be regularly separated from him, her justification and her all of happiness in this life would depend upon being able to clear every hour of her life from suspicion : her return to England with Mr. Villars would make this impossible. Her sense of propriety also revolted from the making the man who had never ceased to be her lover, the first confidant of Sir William's jealousy and ill usage. A conversation between them on such a subject must place them equally in the most critical and embarrassing circumstances; it must unavoidably recal ideas and sentiments that neither ought to feel, and still less to avow; regret and resentment must arise in the breasts of both, when canvassing the consequences of a marriage that had broken asunder all the ties that love had formed between them: and it could hardly be supposed that the lover would not be tempted to seek revenge for the injuries done to the object

object of his affections, where the natural relation that he held to her would seem to give him a right to be the punisher of her oppreffor.

Ellen saw that she had but one resolution to take, but scarcely ever before had she found her will such a rebel to her reason.— While she was engaged in these reflections, she observed that a lady's maid was also busied about the carriages. Ellen's first thought on seeing her was, that she might have spared all her ebatings—Henry was not near her, for Henry was not married; the next reminded her of the length of her absence from England, and of her ignorance of all that had taken place there during that period. This thought was followed by another—if he were married, all objection to making herself known to him would vanish. She stepped out of the shop with a design to make an enquiry of one of the servants, when her better reason caused her as hastily again to enter it. There was no doubt but that Mr. Villars believed her dead;

it was uncertain what would be the effect upon him of her sudden appearance in such peculiar and afflicting circumstances ; his emotions might be mistaken, and she might, by this act of selfish gratification, introduce the fiend jealousy into the breast of a woman who now believed herself happy in his undivided love. If the first wish of Ellen's heart had been to make the happiness of Henry herself, it had long given place to a second, little less fervent, that of seeing him happy with some worthy object, who, in deserving all his love, possessed, and returned it ; probably he had now found such an one, and no personal inconvenience could weigh with Ellen against the slightest hazard of an interruption of their mutual happiness. She resolved, therefore, to give up every thought of discovering herself to him ; but she waited in breathless impatience, and with an agitation not to be described, the moment that would clear up all her doubts ;—she waited not long ; scarcely had she decided to remain concealed, when the master of the carriage

appeared

appeared—it was Henry himself! He was in deep mourning, and leaning familiarly upon his arm was a young genteel looking woman, in deep mourning also: Ellen's heart beat—she gasped for breath. Henry assisted his companion to get into the carriage, and immediately jumping after her, the door was shut, and they were driven away full speed; the other carriage drove up, two servants entered it, and with two others on horseback, followed the first carriage.

Ellen stood immovably fixed, with her eyes eagerly following the whole train until not a glimpse of them remained to be seen; then bursting into tears, she hastily left the shop, almost unconscious that she had ever entered it, and wholly unknowing where she meant to go. A few moments brought her to her recollection; but such was the indescribable anguish that had seized her, that for some time she thought, that in the varied vexations of her distressful life, she had never known so bitter a moment as the present.—

To have been obliged, in the helpless and wretched state she was in, to suffer him, who would have been the softest soother of her sorrow, her warmest friend, her most strenuous protector, thus to depart unassistant to her wants, and unconscious of her distress, pressed so heavily on her mind the severity of her fate, and shewed her to herself so far removed from all human aid, that for a time even her strong and well-disciplined mind was not able to bear up against such a weight of wretchedness. If Cologne had before appeared disgusting, it was now become insupportable; she hurried to get beyond its hated walls. The three classes of people, beggars, ecclesiastics, and nobles, into which its inhabitants are divided, were all alike indifferent to her, nor was the ugliness or desolation of the city itself any longer objects of attention or solicitude; her mind contained but one idea—Henry carried rapidly from her when she most stood in need of his friendship and assistance;—no other thought found admission into her mind—she felt, she saw, she thought of nothing else.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

“ Hope humbly then, to doubt is to rebel ;
“ Let us exult in hope that all will yet be well.”

BEATTIE.

WHEN Ellen got again beyond the city walls, she seemed to breathe more freely ; the tumult of her mind began to subside, she began to acknowledge that no new misfortune had befallen her, that she was in no respect worse in consequence of what had happened ; that Henry, placed beyond the power of assisting her by distance, or by situation, was the same thing in effect, and that if she had been able to bear the one with patience, there was no reason why she should find the other intolerable.

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Having

Having thus restrained that power of imagination which is never indulged but to our hurt, with a recomposed mind she began once more to call a council of her own thoughts, as to what was the best method in which to proceed ;—her finances seemed to allow her little choice, and she resolved (keeping as near to the Rhine as possible) to make the best of her way to Nimeguen, and from thence to Helvoetsluy. But the days were now considerably shortened, and the proportional length of the nights made the trudging to any or no shelter, that might or might not be near when darkness came on, more formidable and grievous than ever. Ellen, therefore, often found herself obliged to sacrifice what would have procured her a meal, to the now almost equally necessary comfort of a lodging secured from the weather ; she still avoided resting in any towns, and made her way from village to village, which in the populous and cultivated country that lies near the Rhine, between Cologne and Nimeguen, she found it not difficult.

difficult to do, nor had she reason to complain of want of humanity or charity in the people;—her gentle manners, her being a foreigner, and above all, the languor and melancholy that had now too strongly taken possession of every feature, seemed to plead irresistibly in her favour. To a night's lodging, and a bowl of milk in the morning, were often added, on dismissing her, a few stivers, or a slice of bread that served for her dinner; the money she carefully hoarded, for her passage to England was perpetually in her mind, and the means when there, that she should take to arrive in Northumberland.

In this manner, and by slow degrees, she reached Nimeguen, without any material evil, or extraordinary adventure. It was at Nimeguen that she had crossed the Rhine when she had travelled with Sir William, and she was well acquainted with the different routes to be pursued, and the manners of the people in Holland. But she well knew the difference of situation, in a coun-

try where nothing is to be had without money, between the wife of a rich English man of fashion, and a poor mendicant, whose very existence depended upon the charity of others. That country where a man pays for the few moments that his great coat lies upon a bench, cannot be very favourable to the wants of any individual who does not contribute something to the great stock of national wealth ; and Ellen could not condemn the principle that made a nation hard-hearted to beggars, whose very existence depended upon the industry of all. The little sustenance she took she therefore contrived in some way to pay for, and as the cheapness of a conveyance by the Trechiscuits enabled her to avail herself of them, as a suspension of her hitherto never-ceasing fatigue, she reached Helvoetfluyse easily and somewhat recruited in strength. Fortunately she arrived only a few hours before the failing of a packet, in which she easily procured a passage, and at an expence proportionate to the meanness of her appearance.

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The only passengers of any fashion were a gentleman and lady, who had few attendants, and appeared not to be rich. Both the lady and her only female servant were sufferers in the greatest degree from sea-sickness ; and as Ellen was happily free from all indisposition, and the only woman besides themselves in the packet, she attended them, at the request of the lady's husband, in the cabin, and afforded them all the assistance and comfort in her power. The passage was prosperous, and not of the longest kind ; and when they landed, the gentleman, in consideration of Ellen's cheerful attendance upon his wife, and judging by her clothes that she was by no means above receiving a small gratuity, gave her, before they parted, five shillings.

Ellen was now in England ; but the emotions with which she once again put her foot upon her native land, after so long and so disastrous an absence, were not those of unmixed joy, or even of very cheerful hopes. During her tedious and difficult journey she had

had seldom had leisure, from the pressing wants of the passing hour, to turn her thoughts upon the fate that might await her if ever she should so far surmount those wants as to accomplish the purpose that she had in hand ; but now, when nearly all her difficulties were over, and her necessities drawing to a conclusion, the situation she should find her friends and family in, with what might be the resolutions that circumstances, or the requisitions of Sir William might call for on her part, filled her mind with anxiety and dread. So far from knowing what to hope, she knew not what to wish ; and if the idea of being regularly separated from Sir William, and being allowed to live unmolested with her father, by occurring the most frequently to her imagination, seemed to say that this was really what would be most acceptable to her, there were so many considerations that checked the rising desire, that it amounted not to a wish.

She had a child ! (at least she hoped she had), and for the sake of this child she would have

have consented to have been placed in a situation much more repugnant to her feelings than a re-union with Sir William would place her in ;—even of Sir William's conduct towards her she was cautious of forming a too decided opinion, and if it could be proved that he had been mistaken, and not malicious, she felt nothing within her unresentful heart that should prevent her endeavouring, by a life of duty and affection, to obliterate from the minds of both all the misery which they had mutually caused each other.

It was impossible not to think of these things ; it was impossible that thinking of them should not sink her to the lowest degree of sadness ; but it was equally impossible that she should form one probable conjecture how she should in future be induced to act. Her impatience, however, to bring her fate to an issue, increased to a feeling of the most painful kind. But although in England, she was still more than two hundred miles from that home where she could alone be sure of a kind reception, or where she could inform herself of those cir-

cumstances upon which the conduct of her future life must depend. To appear as a beggar, in a country, the laws of which provide so amply for the wants of the indigent, as at first sight seem to render it impossible that vice and beggary should be disjoined, and where those very laws, acting as it were upon this supposition, make the very act of asking charity criminal, and assign a punishment for it, was a situation that to Ellen appeared intolerable. The seasonable supply of the five shillings given her by the gentleman, rescued her from a necessity to which, however, she must otherwise have submitted.

She had indeed, during the sad reflections that occupied her mind on this subject whilst on her passage from Holland, debated whether she should not, on her arrival in England, make her case known to some Magistrate; and it is probable she would have had recourse to this method, rather than have appeared in the character of a vagabond, had she continued as entirely destitute as she was

was previous to the gift of the five shillings; but she was very thankful to be saved from this extremity, since, resolute not to have told a false tale, she must have been obliged, both against her inclination and judgment, to have told at least so much of the truth as might have led to discoveries, which she was sensible ought to be made only to her nearest relations, and most assured friends: so seasonable and so important was a gift, in itself so small, that probably the giver would scarcely place it, in balancing his account, on the side of charity. With this five shillings, which had proved a mine of wealth to Ellen, and by the sale of almost every thing she possessed, except the miserable clothes she wore, Ellen was enabled to procure a passage in a coasting vessel, which was to sail the next day for Newcastle, and also to provide for her sustenance on the voyage.

CHAP. XVI.

“ Oh, take the wanderer home !”

BEATTIE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the lateness of the season, the passage proved a happy and tolerably short one, and Ellen at length beheld herself landed within thirty miles of Groby Manor. But she was now absolutely penniless, nor did she possess a single article of clothes, for which, in the opulent and money-getting town of Newcastle, she would have been able to have found a purchaser.— Her objections to appearing as a common beggar, seeking her bread from door to door, were as strong in Northumberland as in Essex ; and the fear of applying to any person in any of the higher ranks of life still stronger.

stronger. It appeared impossible to her, that she should be able to tell such a story as would entitle her to any thing beyond the most common relief, to any person in her own county, without leading to questions which would either involve her in falsehood, or lead to the discovery of too much truth. One valuable she was still possessed of—this was her wedding ring ; and though it had only been the seal of misery to her, she felt an extreme reluctance to parting with it : but scruples and sorrows, founded only in imagination, she was in the habit of subduing—her reason acknowledged that the giving up her wedding ring was the most eligible method of supplying her present wants, of any in her power. She was within a few yards of a silversmith's shop ; she turned towards it, she stopped for a moment at the door, she dreaded to encounter the curiosity that she was aware the application she was about to make would excite—she hesitated, the same thoughts passed through her mind. But compelled by the conviction that

every

every other way to relieve her distress was still more objectionable than this, she entered the shop; she entered it, however, with a look of so much embarrassment and irresolution, as drew on her the notice of the man who kept it. It was not until he had enquired twice in words, and with a manner perfectly civil, what she wanted, that she had courage to advance towards him: then taking off her worn-out glove, and drawing her ring from her finger, she said, with hesitation, “ If, Sir, you would let me have three shillings, or half-a-crown upon this ring, I should think myself much obliged to you.”—She saw the man’s eyes fixed instantly upon her hand, the whiteness of which, with the delicacy of its form, ill accorded with the shabbiness of her garments, and the distress her present application indicated. “ I am not accustomed to take pawns, Madam,” said the man.—“ Perhaps, then,” replied Ellen, “ you would give me the value of its weight, Sir?”—“ It must distress you, Madam, to part with your wed-

ding-

ding ring," returned he, looking earnestly in her face.—"I would not willingly part with it entirely," said Ellen; "if therefore you would be kind enough not to dispose of it for a few days, I should take it as a favor; in less than a week I hope to be able to repurchase it."—"No, Madam," said the man, "I will not take your ring; you are so like a lady that is dead, and who was always better than her word, that I will take your's for so small a sum as this," laying down five shillings, "and if I should lose it, I will think it is given to that lady, and I shall be very well satisfied."—Ellen, astonished and embarrassed, thought herself discovered; and eager to remove from the earnest scrutiny of her new friend, hastily took up the money, and saying, "I am indeed extremely obliged to you, Sir; I will take care not to discredit your friend," she hastened out of the shop. She saw that the man followed her to the door of it, and attentively watched her; she therefore turned as soon as she could into another street, and with

with a beating heart and trembling limbs took shelter in the first shop that presented itself, which could afford her any refreshment. Here, as she purchased some rolls, her thoughts were busily employed in endeavouring to recollect the features of the silversmith, who she was persuaded must have seen her before, and whom, it was probable, that in her happier days she had befriended. Suddenly the remembrance of the grandson of old Deborah crossed her mind, and in the kind relief just now granted her, she recognized the grateful worth of that honest young man. Cheered by the recollection of an act of benevolence, which from the seasonable return which it had produced, seemed to have placed her in a particular manner under the protection of Providence, Ellen pursued her way with a mingled sensation of delight and hope that had long been a stranger to her bosom.— The five or six-and-twenty miles that now lay between her and the haven where she hoped to repose after all her sufferings, however it might have appeared six years ago as

a gulph

a gulph not to be passed by her, in circumstances like the present, now seemed little more than a needle's point ; she felt no difficulty, she apprehended no danger, she thought every object familiar to her, she imagined that she must know every face that she passed, and almost expected to be called by her name by every person she met. The day, however, was somewhat advanced, and night came on, when she was still sixteen miles from Groby Manor ; she easily procured herself a decent and comfortable accommodation for the night, (for she was now rich, and could pay sumptuously for what she wanted) ; but sleep, which had often visited her under the imperfect shelter of a wall, or when exposed to the droppings of a tree, now fled the warm comforts of her present chamber ; the thoughts of the next day filled her mind, and held her eyes waking. She arose with the first rays of light, and resumed her journey.

It was a bright frosty morning, in the beginning of October ; all nature looked cheerful,

ful, and Ellen's heart, which still retained the impressions that she had received in the silversmith's shop the day before, partook of the cheerfulness around her. As she walked forward, these sensations subsided, and gave place to the fears that the probable changes which had taken place during the last four years in the home to which she was returning, naturally gave rise to. The day passed on; Ellen grew every hour nearer to that spot where alone in the whole course of her life she had known happiness, and where only she could hope, if ever happiness were to be hers again, to find it. Her emotions increased every step she advanced; sometimes she was obliged to stop for the refreshment that her failing powers made necessary; at others to remain a few moments motionless where she was, without the power of seeking any.

CHAP. XVII.

“ From incoherent words and sighs
“ Such wondrous transports break,
“ Far more than honied eloquence,
“ With all her tongues can speak ;
“ And now with strong enquiring look,
“ They search each other’s eye,
“ And ask if what they see be true,
“ And doubt the real joy.”

OLD BALLAD.

THE evening approached, and the distant chimnies of Groby Manor appeared. “ If time,” said Ellen, “ has not changed the habits of the dear inhabitants of that beloved mansion, this is the hour when they are about to assemble round the social tea board ; now the evening music, or the evening lecture begins.—

VOL. III.

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Oh beloved friends! there awaits you an interruption to your pleasures that will be infinitely dearer to you than them all!"— Ellen said this as she began to ascend the hill that led, by gentle windings, to the house; she had determined to approach it on that side which looked upon the valley leading to the parsonage, and to make her entrance, if she could, through the windows of the common sitting-room, that opened from the ground: there it was likely that some, if not all the family would be assembled, and as the sun was not yet set, she did not fear finding her entrance barred. The tumult of her mind was such, that her designs might rather be called impulsive than reasoning, and as she ascended the hill, her limbs could hardly support her trembling frame. She reached the top, she drew near the house, a plane-tree was placed so near one of the windows as to prevent all objects beyond it from being seen from thence. It was on this side that Ellen approached; the window

window immediately behind the plane-tree was open ; Ellen intended, or thought that she intended, entering through it. She advanced, her tremblings increased, she was obliged to support herself against the trunk of the plane-tree ; she heard the sound of an instrument, she could see within the room, she looked—at the harpsichord sat the very lady whom she had seen accompanying Mr. Villars six weeks before into his chaise at Cologne. Mr. Villars himself was at that moment behind her chair, and hanging upon her gown was a playful little girl ; in another part of the room sat Mrs. Raymond at work, and near her Mr. Mordaunt, and two young girls, who were also at work. Ellen remained speechless, motionless, gazing intently upon what she saw, and yet unconscious that she saw any thing ; every faculty was suspended, a temporary stupor had seized her.

At this moment one of the girls, raising her head from her work, saw a figure under the plane-tree. “ Who’s there ? ” said she, in

a voice of affright.—“It is me,” said Ellen, and sprang forward; but she could do no more—she sunk lifeless on the window frame. “What sounds are those?” cried Henry; he rushed toward her, he raised her in his arms—“It is—Oh heavens! is *this* my Ellen?”—“Ellen!” said the astonished and bewildered father, “Gracious God! haft thou suffered her to leave thy mansions of bliss to comfort her afflicted parent?”

Ellen was laid upon a sofa, but she continued senseless, nor were those who stood gazing round her more conscious of existence than herself; one of the young people, less interested than the rest in the scene before her, ran for assistance. The room was presently filled with servants—Ellen began to revive; Henry, kneeling before her, had seized both her hands. “I have found her, I have again found her,” repeated he; “and no power on earth shall part us more!”—Ellen heard him not, she saw him not, she saw only her father, and with a sudden motion threw herself at his feet;—he clasped her

her in his arms,—“ It is herself ! she is alive ! Oh blessed God ! what wonders are these !” Although Ellen’s worn-down frame was little able to support such violent and affecting emotions, yet being prepared for the scene, she was the first to recover some degree of composure. “ I am indeed restored to you,” said she, “ by little less than a miracle ; let us not, by our own vehemence, make vain all that God has done for us ;” and looking around her, she seemed to demand whether she saw all the family that time and absence had spared. Her father pressed her to his heart ;—“ You will see your sisters, they are happy ; but your mother (let us not repine) instead of a mother’s embraces receive those of your daughter.”—“ My daughter !” said Ellen, rapturously, “ is this my daughter ?” The lovely child was already in her arms.—“ Dearest infant !” said Ellen ; and overcome by the painfulness of her recollections, a rising sob checked her voice, and she burst into tears. “ Then you, Madam,” said

she, as soon as she could again speak, and addressing herself to the young lady whom she had seen at the harpsichord, “then you, Madam, are not the mother of this beloved baby?”—“Her mother!” returned the lady, “how cruel has Fortune been thus to make strangers of such near relations!”—“She is my sister,” cried Henry, “my youngest sister, the exact image of my Ellen, the darling of my heart.”

There was a question that Ellen longed to ask, yet knew not how. The manner and words of Henry, so different from any which he had ever used since she became a wife, suggested a thought that she knew not how to express; and by the variety of emotions it excited, pressed upon her heart with a weight that was intolerable. She threw herself into her father’s arms, and hiding her face in his bosom, “Oh my father!” said she, “where is Sir William Ackland? Where is my husband?”—“Be composed, dearest creature,” said Mr. Mordaunt, “it is perhaps happy for us all that he can no longer answer for his

his conduct in this world." Ellen became suddenly sick. "Let me retire, I beseech you," said she. "Poor unhappy man!" tears running down her cheeks, "mistaken or cruel, I equally pity you." Mrs. Raymond and Mr. Mordaunt withdrew with Ellen, and Henry accompanied her to the door of Mrs. Raymond's room, carrying the little girl in his arms, from whom Ellen could not bear to be separated a single moment. Ellen was unable to support herself any longer, and at her own request she was put to bed; and all parties being in possession of the great outlines of those events that it most concerned them to know, all farther explanation was, by mutual consent, deferred. Mrs. Raymond could not consent to quit Ellen's bedside during the night, in spite of her remonstrances, who told her, smiling, that she was much more accustomed to be left wholly to her own care, than she could be to spend a night in watching. "In this bed, in this room," added she, "with a table covered as that is, with every thing

that can tempt the appetite, or mitigate the pains of sickness, I am much more likely to be sleepless from astonishment, than from any fear or want of accommodation."

Mrs. Raymond, who could not feel the full force of this observation, yet understood enough of it to be unable to restrain her tears at the thoughts of the former hardships to which Ellen alluded. "It seems so impossible," returned she, weeping, "that you should be really here, that were I to leave you for a moment, I should not expect to find you on my return."

Henry was no sooner apprised by Mr. Mordaunt that he must not hope to see Ellen that night, than he set off to the parsonage. The tale he had to tell was so beyond all credibility, that his friends there for some minutes believed him to be raving; but seeing nothing in his looks or manner to confirm such an opinion, their feelings became little less agitated than his own. The fact that he so constantly averred, that Ellen was alive, and at Groby Manor, he pretended

tended not to account for or explain; and though they began to be convinced that he doubted not the truth of what he said, yet they could not persuade themselves that he was not by some means deceived;—they resolved therefore to verify his words by the evidence of their own senses, and, late as it was, Mr. and Mrs. Thornton and Mary, who, (although she had been married a twelvemonth) still continued at the parsonage, resolved to accompany him to Groby Manor. Mr. Mordaunt had taken his station in a corner of Ellen's bed-chamber; for to separate from her he found to be impossible, and he thought the loss of sleep amply recompensed by seeing her breathe, and sometimes hearing her speak. Miss Villars and the two young Raymonds were in the parlour, waiting the return of Henry; they confirmed to the wondering Thorntons the events of the evening, and their mutual joy and astonishment, with the variety of exclamations and conjectures that engaged them, so perfectly banished all desire of

sleep and rest from the whole party, that it was determined that they should sit up together for the remainder of the night.— Henry and Mary often stole gently to the door of Ellen's room ; they listened, all was quiet—they hoped that she slept. They returned to the parlour to communicate their hopes to their friends, and then again crept to the door to confirm them to themselves. Ellen, however, was sleepless ; but the quiet she imposed on herself enabled her to collect her thoughts, and to prepare for the renewed emotions of the next day.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

—“ Try'd, but not subdu'd
“ Doth she appear.”

GLOVER.

THE next day at length came, and Ellen found her bed insupportably irksome to her. She could no longer delay the knowledge of a thousand particulars, so interesting to her, and so important to her happiness; nor was the impatience of her friends much less than her own. Mrs. Raymond furnished her with clothes; for whatever Ellen could have done, none of her family would have borne to have seen her in those tattered and worn-out garments, that were such painful indications of the hardships which she had suffered.

The result of the reflections suggested through the whole of Ellen's wakeful night, had been a determination to learn from her father, in a conversation between themselves, all the circumstances attendant on Sir William's death, and the actual situation of Henry; it having appeared plainly to her, in the few words that she had yet heard him utter, that his sentiments towards her were the same as ever, and that his hopes of possessing her were now again risen as high as in the happiest days of their mutual affection. But Ellen had too long been accustomed to place the curb of reason upon her wishes, to suffer them alone to influence her actions; she had long ceased to consider Henry as her lover, but she had never ceased to entertain for him that friendship, which his virtues and his love towards her so well deserved.— If affliction had subdued her passions, it had awakened her affections; she was now a mother, and she felt that no consideration on earth could tempt her to any act that might, in its remotest consequences, be prejudicial

to that dear infant so newly found and so highly cherished. If, in her early youth, she had yielded her partiality for the man of her choice, to a sense of the duty he owed his parent, she well knew now how to make it submit to that which she owed her child.— But it was possible that duty and inclination might at length agree ; Ellen's heart fluttered at the thought, but she suffered it not to rise into a wish ; she would have no wish on this subject unsanctioned by her father.

Ellen was scarcely dressed when she desired to see him, and the enraptured, yet anxious parent flew to obey her summons ; she begged Mrs. Raymond would leave them together, but she placed her little girl upon her knees. “ I cannot fear,” said Ellen to herself, “ any faulty impulse of my heart, while I hold to it this pledge and reward of its rectitude.” As Mr. Mordaunt viewed the languid and travel-worn figure of Ellen, as he considered the paleness of her cheek, and the heaviness of her eye, his emotions almost choaked him.—“ Oh my child !” said he, “ what

“ what must you not have suffered, and for what ?”—“ Tell me, my father,” said Ellen, “ how long you have supposed me dead ?”—“ We were taught to believe you died in bringing that infant into the world.”

“ And did Sir William appear afflicted for my loss ? and where and how has he lived since ? and, above all, did he not in dying, give you some reason to suppose that I existed ?”—“ He did not return to England till a twelvemonth after your supposed death ; and then for the sole purpose of placing his child under the care of a relation of his mother’s, and it was not until after I had repeatedly urged him, by every motive I could imagine, to afford me the satisfaction of seeing him, that I could prevail upon him to make me a visit. I was then attending your mother in her last illness ; I could not go to him ; he remained here only two days, and appeared the most wretched of men. I repented that any consideration for self had induced me to force him into a visit that seemed so painful to him ; yet there was

some-

something in his grief that ill accorded with mine—it had more of fury and desperation in it than softness. Once and only once, I attempted to lead him to speak of you ; he started from his chair,—“ Oh ! name her not, she has undone me ! she has ruined my peace for ever ! Worthy old man !” continued he, “ you know not how fatal a gift you bestowed when you gave me your daughter !” I believed the violence of these expressions to be the ravings of grief for a loss, that my own sufferings told me must to a husband be almost past endurance. I entreated he would let me see my grandchild, the sole remains of Ellen. “ She is not like her,” returned he, “ she does not bear her name—she will not, I hope, bear her features.”—“ Oh ! I hope she will,” returned I, fondly, “ and in time, Sir William, you will find comfort in what now perhaps might be too lively an emblem of what you have lost.” He seemed almost convulsed with passion : “ No more,” said he, “ if you would not drive me to madness.” I sought to soothe him, and most carefully,

carefully, during the short time he afterwards staid with me, did I avoid a subject that I now saw he could not bear. He remained some months in London, and I heard from every one of the deep shade of grief that was impressed on his behaviour and countenance. He quitted England the following spring, and returned to it no more. Four months are scarcely past since he died suddenly, with no previous illness, at Vienna. I was informed of the event by a Bohemian nobleman, whom I understood to have been Sir William's intimate friend. There were some words in this gentleman's letter, of which I never until now could guess the meaning, but which must certainly have alluded to the unhappy mistake, from which my beloved child must have suffered so much, and which appears to have made Sir William's life entirely wretched. These words seemed to intimate, that had Sir William been allowed time for any death-bed reflections, he might have been induced to have mitigated the severity of some determini-

determination, the justice of which had not been sufficient to satisfy him under the rigour of it. I considered this intimation merely as a sort of an apology for some action of Sir William's which might some time probably come to my knowledge, which his friend was conscious would stand in need of one."

"I found," continued Mr. Mordaunt, for Ellen broke not in upon his discourse, "that the guardians appointed to your dear infant, were people unknown to me, and wholly unconnected with my family, and it seemed as if Sir William wished to keep her as far apart from every one of us as possible; but my heart longed to see her, and our dear Henry, who has been my guardian-angel under all my troubles, and is now the support of my declining age, procured me this blessing, as he has done many others. He prevailed upon the lady with whom she is placed, to trust her to the care of his sister and himself, when they were about to make a visit to Northumberland; they have

been

been with me ten days, and there has not been an hour in any one of those days, in which Henry and I have not soothed our never ceasing regret by endeavouring to trace your features in the lineaments of that infant's face."

Ellen felt that her heart was not indifferent to this panegyric upon Henry. "And Lord Villars," asked she, "does he still pursue the same projects of ambition and avarice, so often defeated, but never given up?"— "Lord Villars," repeated Mr. Mordaunt, "do you not know—but alas! you cannot know—there is now no other Lord Villars than Henry."—"Gracious Heaven!" said Ellen, and her pale cheek became still paler.—"He died of a liver complaint about three months ago," continued Mr. Mordaunt; "his death was foreseen, and Henry crossed the Channel to bring home his sister, who had been some time abroad with Lady Edwards; but Lord Villars died before they could return, before indeed Henry had reached the place where his sister then was.

Since

Since his return to England, he has been wholly taken up with his family affairs, and it was not till within these ten days that he had leisure to give me, what he knows to be my best comfort, his dearly beloved society.”—

“ But, dear Sir,” said Ellen, “ my brother, what of him, does he afford you no comfort?”—“ None, Ellen, none; he and Lady Almeria have no relish for the shades of a northern retirement, or for the society of an old man, though that man is a father; their life is one unvaried round of dissipation and expence, and the only satisfaction I reap from their union is, sometimes the company of some of their children, of which they have three.”—“ My sisters?” said Ellen.—“ Are happily, though not splendidly, married; they are both settled in this county, and do every thing in their power to make my old age comfortable; my daughter Raymond and her two girls are kind and good to me; and now,” cried he, clasping her in his arms, “ since I once again embrace my Ellen, there is nothing this world has more to give.”

give."—" And I," said Ellen, " if I can bless the declining years of my father, and guard the opening dawn of this dear child, what more shall I have to ask in this world?"

—" Oh my Ellen!" returned the delighted parent, " you have much more to ask, and much more to do; you have to reward, I will not say the constancy, for that may be objectionable, but the virtues of our Henry; happiness too is in long arrears to you, and you may now reasonably ask for payment."—" But can I," said Ellen, " give my child another parent? Can I hazard her welfare in the shock of interests, so often the consequence of a second connection?"—" Who would you sooner chuse for a parent to your child," returned Mr. Mordaunt, smiling, " than Henry? Who would you rather make the guardian of your dearest interest than him? But I leave him to plead his own cause. My Ellen must have undergone a wonderful metamorphosis indeed if she found in her breast any impediment to his wishes from mistaken delicacy or weak punctilio, and every reason must

must be on his side. And now, my dearest, let us go down together; I am impatient to hear your story, but I will not detain you from your friends, whose tender interest in all that concerns you, has kept them waking the whole night, and who are as impatient to see and hear you as myself."

CHAP. XX.

“ The form of virtue dignify’d the scene ;
“ In her majestic sweetnes was display’d
“ The mind sublime and happy. From her lips
“ Seem’d eloquence to flow.”

GLOVER.

“ Last came joy’s ecstatic trial.”

COLLINS.

ELLEN arose, but she was surprised when she came to move to find herself so enfeebled and trembling, that she could not but suppose, that had her journey been prolonged one other day, she must have sunk under the fatigue; but she recollect’d not how much more the emotions of the mind exhaust the strength than any labours of the body. What she had undergone since her arrival in Northumberland had contributed

more

more towards the destruction of her bodily powers, than all the hardships a pilgrimage of more than eight hundred miles had exposed her to.

No sooner was the door of her chamber heard to open by her listening friends below, than Henry flew up stairs, and seeing her inability to support herself, and that Mr. Mordaunt tottered with her weight,—“Let me support you, my dearest cousin,” said he; “it is a relation’s office you will not deny me.” Ellen, almost sinking, suffered him to put his arms round her; but he was seized with so violent a fit of trembling, that he was obliged for a moment to support both himself and her by leaning against the wall. Ellen had been apprised that the Thorntons were below; and they therefore, having no fear of her suffering from the surprise of their sudden appearance, could no longer restrain their impatience, but hastily followed Henry up stairs. It was fortunate they did so, for so great was his emotion become, that he could not have supported

ported Ellen another moment. Mr. Thornton clasped his arms round her; the beloved Mary received her sinking head upon her bosom; while Mrs. Thornton, half frantic with her joy, deluged her with perfumed water one moment, and stifled her with caresses the next. A moment's consideration convinced them all that Ellen was unfit to be removed down stairs; they therefore agreed to assemble in Mr. Mordaunt's library, which was immediately opposite the bed-chamber assigned to Ellen. Henry could not however prevail upon himself again to quit her, and having regained steadier nerves, he carried her, with the assistance of Mr. Thornton, into the library; here being laid upon a sofa, a few moments sufficed to recompose her mind.

“ I could not have suspected myself of so much debility,” said she smiling; “ and when I come to tell you what I have been doing for the last three months, you will agree with me that I have little right to such fine lady-like airs.”—“ Oh !” cried Henry, fervently,

fervently, "you are weak, we are all weak from feelings no fine lady ever knew."—Indeed the group that were now gathered round Ellen seemed to have forgotten all consideration of self, in the thoughts of the beloved object they encircled. Mr. Mordaunt had drawn a low stool close to the sofa, and held Ellen's hands in his. Henry was leaning over the back of it, with his eyes intently fixed upon her face; Mary was upon her knees, pressing close up between Mr. Mordaunt and Ellen; while the rest of the party had disposed of themselves in a kind of outward circle, and all were alike emulative of the pleasure of administering to Ellen's wants: one idea seemed to prevail with them all, that the miseries which she had suffered, and the hardships she had undergone, called for every indemnification in their power.—Ellen had scarcely any voice, and, bathed in tears, was unable to look up.—"I have not," said she, in broken and interrupted accents, "in all my sorrows shed so many tears from grief as I now shed from joy; but indeed I must not indulge myself—I

must shake off this weakness; yet who shall wonder that the sense of the mercies I have received is so overcoming?"

Impatient as the whole circle were to be acquainted with every particular of Ellen's fate, they all with one voice declared against the indulgence of their curiosity till she was somewhat more restored to composure; but she was aware that this would never be while she had so interesting a history to relate.— "Believe me," said she, "that nothing is so likely to hush these contending feelings as the dulness of narrative; I shall perhaps fatigue myself with the length of my story, but such fatigue will be salutary; I want sleep, mine has been long broken, and for the two last nights wholly interrupted;—if I can talk myself to sleep, there is nothing from which I shall receive so much benefit; and to sleep while I have such a story to tell, is impossible."

The party drew closer round her, and Henry, half invited, found a seat on the sofa, at her feet, as, supported by pillows, she changed her posture from that of lying down

down to a sitting one. It cannot be doubted what were the emotions with which Ellen was listened to. Pity, admiration, grief, indignation, and astonishment succeeded each other ; but when she came to relate the circumstance which seemed to have sealed her fate, and of which, being absolutely ignorant, she was at a loss whether to impute to mistake, or to contrivance, Henry, in an agony he could not restrain, threw himself on his knees before her. "Oh my Ellen !" cried he, grasping her hands, "my suffering, my ever-beloved Ellen, do not, do not hate me ! I am the wretch that have undone you : I conducted you to that hated prison, I closed its doors upon you ; your agonizing days, your sleepless nights were all the gift of my hand : But, Oh ! if you cannot pardon me, do not, do not hate me !"—"Dear Henry," replied Ellen, gently returning the pressure of his hand, "be assured I never entertained a sentiment of *hatred* even towards the *real* author of my sufferings ; how then should I hate *you*?"—"And can you forgive me ? And do you call me your dear Henry ? Mr. Thornton, pray for me—I shall

not keep my senses."—"Nor," said Mr. Thornton, fervently, "suffer Ellen to keep her's. Can you admire the strength of mind which has supported her through such trying scenes, and yet desert yourself so pitifully?"

—"But I was not tried with joy," said Ellen, holding out her hands towards Henry, (who had hastily let them go on hearing Mr. Thornton's rebuke); "and those who have felt them both, know how much more difficult it is to bear joy than sorrow."—Henry's tears rolled down his cheeks, he endeavoured to conceal his face as he stooped to kiss again and again the dear hands he held. "Say," cried he, in accents scarcely articulate, "say you forgive me for all my faults."—"Let us not talk of forgiveness," returned Ellen, "and but this once suffer me to assure you, that you have lightened my heart of the single remaining weight that oppressed it, by clearing the memory of a man whom I would not condemn from the imputation of the only act of *villany* with which I could charge him. It is easy to pardon injuries originating in mistake, and a

mistake

mistake too that I understand has cost the unhappy person so deceived, still more than it has cost me."—Henry then explained how fatally his scrupulous attention to the delicacy and peace of Ellen had succeeded. He remembered the contents of Lady Almeria's note, though he could not at that distance of time call to mind the exact terms of it, and upon which Sir William's mistake was grounded. The good heart of Mr. Mordaunt rejoiced equally with Ellen's, that there was so strong an appearance of impropriety in the conduct of Henry, as to justify the confirmation he had given to those injurious suspicions which had, however, been before most unjustifiably taken up. Without such an apology, Sir William must have appeared one of the worst of men; but neither Mr. Mordaunt, nor the christian Mr. Thornton, much less could Henry admit of any excuse for the method that he had taken to gratify his revenge, nor the right which he had assumed to himself of so cruelly punishing offences for which the laws of his country has appointed a much less

severe chastisement.—Nor will it be expected that the females of the party were more favourable to so *illegal* a proceeding ; and Ellen, though she did not chuse to join in the condemnation, entered not into defence of a conduct which she considered as indefensible. In mentioning the adventure in the ruined Monastery, she carefully avoided naming the name of Mr. Raymond, though she expatiated on the happy circumstance that it had proved to her, in procuring her the ducat, which she had found of so much use. It was with the greatest emotion that she related what she had ~~saw~~ on the sight of Henry at Cologne. “ And could you ? did you ? ” echoed from every mouth, “ in such circumstances, in such distress, could you suffer him to depart without making yourself known to him ? ”—“ What could I do ? ” cried Ellen, in a tone of self-defence ; “ what power on earth could have convinced Sir William of my innocence, had I returned to England with Henry ? And woud you have had me bartered my reputaion, and my only chance of happiness, for an escape from

from hardships that I had already proved not to be insupportable? But God only knows what it cost me to make the choice I did!"

—“The choice!” said Mr. Mordaunt, rapturously, “the choice was like yourself; it was the result of the purest principle and the steadiest reason: But this story will kill us all; for God’s sake make haste to arrive in England, or I too shall incur Mr. Thornton’s censure, for my brain will hardly bear it.”—“Mr. Thornton,” said Mrs. Thornton, sobbing, “has little reason to reproach you; look at him, did you ever see him so moved before?”—“Oh! who would not be moved,” said Mr. Thornton, “at such a proof of the strength of rectitude, and the power of reason? And yet, wonderful as it appears, it is in the power of every one, to whom God has given common understanding, and has not cursed with unnatural depravity, to act as uprightly and heroically as Ellen has done; all the rest is the result of cultivation, of self-discipline, and of a continued habit of referring all our actions to principle.”—“My ever dear preceptor,”

said Ellen, “ if I have been able to act rightly, I owe it to you, to my dear Mrs. Thornton, to my father; but chiefly I will say to *you*, who, never sparing of your praise when I deserved commendation, gave it always with the same judgment you have now done; and by convincing me that the path of virtue was practicable to all, made me ashamed to represent it to myself as difficult.”—Henry could not speak; he sat with his face rested upon the arm of the sofa, in a state of emotion that shook his whole frame; he heard not Mr. Thornton’s moral—he gave no credit to the easy practicability of such virtues as Ellen’s; he thought her an angel, and that it was scarcely amongst her fellow angels that she was to be equalled. Ellen hastened to conclude a narrative, the circumstances of which so deeply affected her auditors; she was happy to have the task over, and felt herself more capable of composure and rest when it was done. She now learnt what, from the multiplicity of events each side had to communicate, had hitherto remained untold—that the unhappy Mr.

Ray-

Raymond had met the fate his vices provoked, and that instead of the safe retreat which he had promised himself in Switzerland, the vengeance of an injured family had overtaken him in a few days from the time when Ellen had left him. Refusing to submit to the officers of justice, who were employed to secure him, he had attempted a defence, impossible to be made good, but which was conducted with so much violence and danger to his opponents, as had obliged them to attempt subduing him by means as desperate as those which he had used in his defence.— In this struggle he had received wounds that had proved mortal in a few days; his death had put Mrs. Raymond in possession of a small jointure, and had secured to his daughters the few thousand pounds that had been settled upon them. Ellen now revealed that it was to Mr. Raymond that she owed the seasonable relief that she had before mentioned, and expatiated on the earnest desire that he had shewn of being farther serviceable to her. To hear of such praiseworthy dispositions in a man whom she had once loved,

loved, was very acceptable to Mrs. Raymond ; but as ill usage had long ago worn out her affection for him, his death had rather shocked than afflicted her, and in the present happier prospects of her family, she soon learnt to consider it rather as a release than a misfortune. Ellen's two other sisters joined the happy party at Groby Manor the next day, and most unfeignedly partook of the joy that reigned there. In a few days Ellen recovered her usual serenity of mind, and in a few weeks she was perfectly restored to bloom and health.

CHAP. XXI.

“ Such a sacred and home-felt delight,
“ Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
“ I never knew till now.”

MILTON.

AND now what avails it to prolong a narrative, the conclusion of which is already anticipated ? Opposed by no one duty, supported by her own wishes, sanctioned by

the authority of a parent, can it be supposed that Henry's revived claim to the hand and heart of Ellen was disallowed? Yet did she feel an unspeakable reluctance to becoming his wife, until her reputation was as spotless as her life. Her return to existence must of necessity be known, and with it must be known the suspicions that had so long held her in seclusion from the world; the death of Sir William made her vindication difficult, since no one could be assured of her innocence but those who would naturally screen her guilt. The most unequivocal testimony was that of the Bohemian Nobleman, and to him it was resolved to apply; Henry determining that if the matter could not be settled satisfactorily by letter, he would himself take a journey to Vienna. Mr. Mordauñt drew up a plain statement of all the facts upon which he had reason to think Sir William had grounded Ellen's condemnation; Lady Almeria's testimony on those which had seemingly been such unequivocal marks of her guilt, was added thereto, and the nobleman was entreated to declare whether Sir

William

William laid any thing more to her charge than this explanation obviated. The natural eloquence of a parent trembling for the reputation of his child, gave an energy to Mr. Mordaunt's entreaties and remonstrances that must have affected any heart not wholly callous. The heart of the Bohemian was not of this nature ; he had long entertained doubts of the guilt of a woman to whose excellencies Sir William's never-ceasing regrets had done reluctant justice ; and since her escape he had received such proofs from Mrs. Ulric of the purity of her mind, and the goodness of her principles, as had well prepared him for the vindication of her conduct which he now received. The answer he returned was the most satisfactory possible.

He informed Mr. Mordaunt that Sir William himself had frequently declared in the last months of his life, that were it possible he could have been mistaken in what his own senses had witnessed, he should be persuaded that he had wronged the unfortunate Ellen ; that remorse for the severity of

of the punishment he had inflicted, even supposing her guilty, had haunted every hour of his life ; and that he seemed not unfrequently to regret the strictness with which his orders, not to convey any letter or message to him from her, had been observed, and that nothing withheld him from again seeking her, but the insupportable shame that must have overwhelmed him, either had she been able to have cleared herself from the crimes imputed to her, or that would have attended his restoring her to the world, guilty or innocent ; and that, finally, even the dread of this shame would probably have given way to the increasing wretchedness of his mind, had his life been spared a little longer.

The Bohemian stated it as having been his own intention, after the death of his friend, to have visited Ellen in her prison ; and from the opinion that he should have been able to have formed of her from such an interview, to have regulated his own future conduct, as to the continuation of her imprisonment, or the putting a speedy and final end to it.

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He ingenuously confessed that though, had he found her innocent, he should have held his friend's reputation as nothing when compared with the injustice and cruelty of detaining her any longer a captive; yet that, had she appeared to him guilty, he should have preferred suffering her to languish out her life in perpetual confinement, to the fixing such a stain upon Sir William's memory, as her restoration to the world, and the publication of the whole story must have done.

The generous Bohemian, after congratulating the happy father on the innocence and escape of his daughter, informed him that, in order that no cloud might obscure a happiness so dearly purchased, and so amply deserved, he had written a full vindication of her character to the guardian of her child, and the trustees of her settlement; and this he had done, he said, not more from a conviction that by such a testimony to her virtues he offered the most acceptable proof of his inviolable attachment to his deceased friend, than from the assurance he had in his own mind,

mind, that he was offering a tribute to truth, and from the pleasure that resulted to himself, in an act of justice and compensation.

In consequence of this well-judged and generous interference of this amiable Bohemian, Ellen found no difficulty in having her daughter given to her wishes ; by this agency she was enabled also to acquit herself, as far as money could acquit her, of her obligations to the good Mrs. Ulric and the faithful Theresa ; nor can it be supposed that the grandson of old Deborah was forgotten. Henry, in the ample provision that his disinterested heart had apportioned to every branch of his family, had left himself poor ; but he had more than sufficient for happiness. He revived the scheme which so many years before he had pressed with so much fruitless earnestness. Ellen and he resolved to content themselves with her jointure until his estate had cleared itself of every incumbrance ; and, at the earnest entreaty of Mr. Mordaunt, they took up their abode at Groby Manor. The cottage of old Deborah was enlarged and fitted up for the reception of Mrs. Raymond and her

her daughters, that they might (while always most welcome to Groby Manor) have a place to retire to, when under the dominion of that wish which is felt at times by every human mind—the wish, that as we shut the door upon us, we may be able to say, “Now I am at home.” Of the happiness of Henry and Ellen, of the feelings of Mr. Mordaunt, of the contentment of the Thorntons, and of the peace and satisfaction of all within the reach of their benevolence, it were needless to tell. To all who have hearts and principles similar to their’s, all that could be said would be superfluous; to those of opposite feelings and opinions it would be unintelligible.

Such then is the history of Ellen. Instructed by her example, let no one affirm the *omnipotency of love*—let no one assert the *uncontrollableness of sorrow*: Be it remembered, that in the exertion of PLAIN SENSE, and the exercise of *unshaken integrity* lay all her powers; and let not any one who means not to forego his claim to such distinctions, plead, as his excuse for *vice or weakness, the dominion of passion, or the irresistibility of grief*.

